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"Paris is beautiful, is it not?" Page 6.



From the French of   ❁❁❁❁❁❁  
❁❁❁❁❁❁❁❁ Alphonse Daudet  
By Virginia Champlin   ❁❁❁❁❁❁



Chicago and New York   ❁❁❁



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**To**

**Mr. George Parsons Lathrop,**

whose appreciation of foreign authors has brought

them many admirers,

this translation is dedicated,

in memory of enjoyment afforded by his prose

and poetical writings, and as a slight

recognition of his kindness and

literary encouragement.



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# KINGS IN EXILE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FIRST DAY.

FRÉDÉRIQUE, who was feverish and exhausted, had been sleeping since morning, and dreaming of her troubles as a dethroned and exiled queen, and was living again amid the tumult and anguish of a two-months' siege. Her sleep was disturbed by bloody visions of war, and broken by sobs, shudders, and nervous tremors, from which she awoke with a start of fear.

"Zara ! where is Zara ?" she cried.

One of her waiting-women approached the bed, and gently quieted her : H. R. H. the Count of Zara was sleeping quietly in his room ; Madame Eleonora was with him.

"And the king ?"

"He went out at noon in one of the hotel carriages."

"Alone ?"

"No : his Majesty took the councillor Boscovich with him."

The servant's Dalmatian *patois*, which was hard and resonant as the sound of waves rolling pebble-stones,

caused the queen's terrors to vanish ; and the quiet hotel room, of which she had merely caught a glimpse on arriving at daybreak, gradually impressed her with its comforting commonplaceness and luxurious furniture, its bright draperies, tall mirrors, and soft, white woollen carpet, on which fell, through the window-blinds, shadows from the rapid, noiseless flight of swallows, interspersed with occasional moths.

"Five o'clock already ! Come, Petscha, dress my hair quickly ! I am ashamed at having slept so long."

It was five o'clock, and the most charming day with which the summer of 1872 had yet delighted the Parisians.

When the queen stepped out on the long balcony of the Hotel des Pyramides, which had fifteen windows along the front, shaded by pink awnings, and facing the most beautiful part of the Rue de Rivoli, she gazed around her in wonder and admiration. Below, on the broad road, an unbroken file of carriages, mingling the noise of their wheels with the light sprinkling of the watering-carts, swept like the wind down towards the Bois in a confused dazzle of glittering harnesses and bright toilets.

Then, from the crowd hurrying in at the gilded gates of the Tuileries, the charmed gaze of the queen wandered to the bright mass of white dresses, fair hair, gay silks, toy-balloons, and the pleasure-seekers and children in holiday attire who are to be seen in the great Parisian garden on sunny days ; and it finally rested with delight on a dome of verdure, an immense roof of dense foliage, which, as seen from above, was formed by chestnut-trees, under whose shade a military band was playing, adding its music to the merry babel of children's voices.

The bitter heartache of the exiled queen was gradually

soothed by the sight of the joy around her. A pleasant sense of warmth enveloped her all around like a clinging, supple, silken net. Her cheeks, faded by watching and privations, now wore a healthy rose-tint ; and she exclaimed, "Ah, my God, how happy one is here !"

The most unfortunate sometimes have these sudden and unconscious moments of delight ; and it does not come from human beings, but from the limitless eloquence of inanimate objects.

To this dethroned queen, — cast into exile with her husband and child by one of those revolutions of the people which make one think of earthquakes, thunder and lightning, and volcanic eruptions, — to this woman whose low, haughty brow still bore the mark where had rested one of the finest crowns in Europe, words could not have brought consolation ; and here joyous nature, blooming in renewed life in this marvellous summer of Paris (which has an atmosphere between that of a hot-house and the mild coolness of river countries), spoke to her of hope, restoration, and peace.

But, while relaxing the tension of her nerves and drinking in the fertile scene, the exile all at once shudders. Yonder, at her left, near the entrance to the garden, stands a spectral monument of burned walls, with reddened columns and a crumbling roof, and whose windows are holes against a blue space, the open front having a background of ruins ; and at the end, looking upon the Seine, a pavilion almost entire, gilded by the flame which has blackened the iron of its balconies. It was all that was left of the palace of the Tuileries.

The sight of it cost the queen deep emotion ; and she felt stunned, as if her heart had fallen down on those rocks. Ten years, — it was not ten years since then ! Oh, how

sad was chance ! and how prophetic it seemed to her to have taken up her abode opposite these ruins !

In the spring of 1864 she lived there with her husband. A bride of three months, the Countess of Zara displayed in the allied courts her happiness as a wife and an hereditary princess. Every one loved and welcomed her.

In the Tuileries particularly there were balls and *fêtes* without number. She beheld them again behind those crumbled walls, and saw once more the vast and brilliant galleries dazzling with light and jewels, and the court-dresses trailing down the grand staircases between a double row of glittering cuirasses ; and the music from the invisible band, which reached her now and then from the garden, seemed to her the band of Valdeufel in the Hall of the Marshals. Was it not to this lively stirring air that she had danced with their cousin Maximilian a week before his departure for Mexico? Yes : it was that very air, — a quadrille formed by emperors and kings, queens and empresses, whose august faces, and the voluptuous measures of the dance, were brought before her by this *motif* from “La Belle Hélène :” Max, thoughtful, and biting his blond beard ; Carlotta opposite him, near Napoleon, radiant and transfigured by the joy of being an empress. Where were now the dancers in that beautiful quadrille? All dead, exiled, or mad. Mourning upon mourning ; disaster after disaster ! God, then, was no longer on the side of kings. Then she remembered all that she had suffered since the death of the old King Leopold had placed on her brow the double crown of Illyria and Dalmatia. Her daughter, her first-born, had been carried off, in the midst of the sacred festivals, by one of those strange and obscure maladies which cause the extinction of a family, and thereby end a race ; so

that the candles around the dead mingled their light with the illuminations of the city, and on the day of the burial at L'Église du Dôme there had not been time to remove the flags. Together with these great griefs, and the anxiety which her son's delicate health constantly caused her, she had other sorrows known only to herself; for her woman's pride made her conceal them in the most secret corner of her heart. Alas! the heart of the people is no more faithful than that of kings.

One day — no one knew why — this Illyria, which had given them so many *fêtes*, became disaffected towards her sovereigns. Misunderstandings arose, followed by obstinacy, defiance, and finally hatred, — that horrible hatred of a whole country which is felt in the air and in the silence of the streets, and is manifested by ironical looks and the frowns of bent brows, which made the queen afraid to show herself at a window, and obliged her to shrink into the corner of her carriage during her short rides.

Oh, those cries of death beneath the terraces of her *château* at Laybach! As she looked at the great palace of the kings of France, she fancied she heard them again. She saw once more the last meeting of the council, and the ministers, pale and mad with fear, imploring the king to abdicate. Then she recalled their flight in peasants' garb at night across the mountains; the villages in rebellion; the inhabitants shouting, as intoxicated with liberty as were those in the cities; and bonfires everywhere on the mountain-tops. And she also remembered the tears of gratitude she shed amid all this woe on finding in a cabin milk for her son's supper; finally the sudden resolution with which she inspired the king to shut himself up in Ragusa, which was still faithful, and the two months of privation and suffering passed in the besieged city with the

royal child ill and almost dying of hunger ; the shame of the final surrender ; the gloomy embarking in the midst of a silent, weary crowd ; and the French ship carrying them to other miseries, — to cold lands and the unknown trials of exile, — while behind them the new flag of the Illyrian Republic floated victorious over the crumbling walls of the royal *château*. Of all this did the Tuileries remind her.

“Paris is beautiful, is it not?” suddenly said a voice near her that was youthful and joyous, notwithstanding its nasal tone.

It was the king, who had just appeared on the balcony holding the little prince in his arms, and showing him the wide expanse of verdure, roofs, and cupolas, and the people moving through the streets in the beautiful light of the closing day.

“Oh, yes, very beautiful!” said the child, a poor little fellow of five or six years, with sharp, marked features, and very light hair, which had been cut short since his sickness ; and who looked around him with an amiable but weak smile, astonished at no longer hearing the cannon of the siege, and feeling enlivened by the cheerful scene around. For him exile opened happily. Neither did the king seem very sad : his two hours’ ride had given him a bright, healthful look, which formed a strong contrast to the queen’s sorrowful countenance. They belonged to two absolutely distinct types : he was slender and frail, with a dull complexion, black, curly hair, and a light mustache, which he continually twirled with a pale and too pliant hand ; and he had handsome eyes, whose expression was rather troubled, irresolute, and childlike, which, although he was over thirty, made one say on seeing him, “How young he is !”

The queen, on the contrary, was a robust Dalmatian,

with a serious air and sparing in gestures ; and was the real man of the two, in spite of the brilliant delicacy of her complexion and her superb hair of Venetian blond, in which the East seemed to have mingled red and tawny tints.

Christian appeared constrained in her presence, and somewhat wearied, like a husband who has received too much devotion and sacrifice. He asked in gentle tones if she had slept well, and how she felt after her journey ; and she answered in a manner which she endeavored to make kind, but which was full of condescension, though in reality she was thinking only of her son, whose nose and cheeks she touched, and whose every movement she watched with the anxiety of a mother.

"He is much better here than he has been," said Christian in a low voice.

"Yes : color is coming back to his face," she answered in the same familiar tone, which they only used when speaking of the child, who, smiling from one to the other, brought their foreheads together in his pretty caresses, as if he understood that his two little arms formed the only true link between their opposite natures.

Below, on the sidewalk, some curious people who had heard of the arrival of the sovereigns, stopped for a moment, and were looking up at this king and queen from Illyria, whose heroic defence in Ragusa had made them celebrated, and whose portraits appeared on the first page of the illustrated journals. Soon, as it happens when one person stops and looks at a pigeon on the edge of a roof, or at an escaped parrot, idlers increased in number, and gazed up in the air, not knowing what was to be seen. A crowd looked towards the young couple, **who were in travelling costume**, with the child's fair head

above them as if held high by the hope of the conquered, and the joy which they felt at still keeping him alive after such a frightful tempest.

"Are you coming, Frédérique?" asked the king, who was annoyed at the attention they attracted.

But the queen, who was accustomed to brave the antipathy of crowds, held up her head haughtily, and answered, —

"Why should we leave? We are very comfortable on this balcony."

"Because — I forgot — Rosen is here with his son and daughter-in-law. He wishes to see you."

At the name of Rosen, which recalled many kind and loyal services, the queen's eyes brightened.

"My worthy duke! I was expecting him," she said. And as she cast a haughty look into the street before re-entering, a man opposite sprang upon the lower part of the fence around the Tuileries, and stood above the heads of the crowd. Some one had done the same at Laybach when their window was fired at; and Frédérique had a vague fear of a similar attack, and drew back. A high forehead, locks scattered by the wind, with the sun shining on them, as, with uplifted hat, a calm, strong voice shouted above the noise in the street, "Long live the king!" was all that she saw of the unknown friend who dared in the heart of republican Paris, before the crumbled walls of the Tuileries, to greet with a welcome sovereigns who had lost their crown.

This kindly salutation, which she had so long been deprived of, had the same effect on the queen as would a bright fire after a long walk in the cold. It warmed her to the very heart, and the sight of old Rosen completed the beneficial re-action.



General the Duke de Rosen, the former chief of the military service, had been away from Illyria three years, — ever since the king had removed him from his post of confidence to give it to a Liberal, thus favoring new ideas to the detriment of what was then called at Laybach the queen's party. Certainly he might well be angry with Christian, who had coldly sacrificed him, and let him depart without a word of regret or farewell, — he, the conqueror at Mostar and Livno, and the hero of the great Montenegrin wars.

After having sold castles, lands, and all, and given his departure the effect of a strong protestation, the old general settled at Paris, married his son there, and, during three long years of vain waiting, felt his anger at royal ingratitude increase with the sorrows of exile and the melancholy of an unoccupied life. And yet, at the first news of the arrival of his sovereigns, he hastened to them, and now was standing erect in the middle of the *salon*, his tall figure reaching the chandelier. He was waiting with so much emotion for the favor of a welcome, that one could see his long pandour limbs tremble, and the quick breathing of his broad chest under the cross of the Legion of Honor on his tight-fitting blue frock-coat cut like that of an officer. His face alone — resembling a sparrow-hawk's, with eyes of steel, a nose like the beak of a hawk, a few bristling white hairs, and a thousand little wrinkles on its weather-beaten skin — wore an impassive look.

The king, who did not like scenes, and who was rather embarrassed by this interview, assumed a lively tone of cordial fellowship, saying, as he approached and held out his hands, —

“Well, General, you were right. I held too loose a rein. I was thrown, and am stiff from the fall.”

Then, seeing that his old follower was bending his knee, he nobly raised him, and held him to his bosom in a close embrace. No one could prevent the duke from kneeling to his queen, who felt strangely moved as the old mustache touched her hand with a respectful, passionate caress.

"Ah, my poor Rosen ! my poor Rosen !" she murmured. And she slowly closed her eyes, that no one might see her tears ; but all those she had shed for years had left their trace on the delicate smoothness of her eyelids from the hours of watching, anxiety, and the wounds which women think they hide in the depth of their being, but which show on the surface as the least agitation leaves visible ripples on the water. For a second her beautiful face, with its pure lines, wore a sad, weary expression, which did not escape the old soldier.

"How she has suffered !" he thought, as he looked at her ; and, to conceal his emotion, he rose quickly, turned to his son and daughter-in-law, who were at the other end of the room, and with the same stern manner in which he shouted through the streets of Laybach, "Draw sabres ! charge the mob !" he called, "Colette, Herbert, come and salute your queen !"

Prince Herbert de Rosen — who was almost as tall as his father, with jaws resembling those of a horse, and innocent, babyish cheeks — obeyed the summons, followed by his young wife. He walked with difficulty, leaning on a cane, having eight months previous broken his leg and crushed several ribs at the Chantilly races ; and the general did not fail to remark, that had it not been for that accident, which placed his son's life in danger, both would have been found behind the defences of Ragusa.

"I should have gone with you, father," interrupted the

princess in a heroic tone, which did not harmonize in the least with her name — “Colette” — and her little kitten-like face, which looked so *spirituelle* and bright under her fluffy, light curls.

The queen could not help smiling, and held out her hand cordially; while Christian twirled his mustache, and with eager curiosity watched the little Parisian, — the pretty, fluttering bird of fashion, with trailing, radiant plumage, a mass of overskirts and flounces, and whose showy prettiness was in strong contrast with the noble features and majestic type of Illyria.

“Where did that devil of a Herbert get such a jewel?” he said to himself, envying the playmate of his childhood, — that tall booby with goggle eyes, and hair parted and plastered in Russian fashion on a low, narrow forehead. Then it occurred to him, that, if this type of woman was rare in Illyria, it was seen everywhere in the streets of Paris; and this thought made exile at last seem endurable. Besides it could not last long; for the Illyrians would soon tire of their republic. He would be away from their country only two or three months on a royal vacation, which he must spend as gayly as possible.

“Do you know, General,” he said, laughing, “some one has already urged me to buy a house? It was an Englishman, who called on me this morning, and offered me a magnificent hotel, carpeted, and furnished with linen, silver, china, and servants; and there were also horses in the stable, and carriages in the coach-house, and all to be put in my possession in forty-eight hours, and chosen from whatever locality might please me best.”

“I am acquainted with your Englishman, your Highness: it is Tom Levis, the agent for foreigners.”

"Yes : it seems to me it was some such name. Have you ever had business-dealings with him?"

"Oh, all the strangers who come to Paris receive a call from Tom in his cab ! But I hope, for your Majesty's sake, that your acquaintance with him will not go any farther."

The particular attention with which Prince Herbert, as soon as Tom Levis's name was mentioned, began to look at the ribbon of his shoes, which were open, disclosing his silk stockings, and the furtive glance which the princess gave her husband, made it plain to Christian, that, if he needed information about the illustrious agent in Rue Royale, these young persons could furnish it.

But how could Levis's agency be of use to him? He desired neither house nor carriage, and expected to pass the few months of his stay in Paris in a hotel.

"Is not that your opinion, Frédérique?"

"Oh, certainly ! it is much the wisest," answered the queen, who at heart, however, did not share her husband's illusions, nor his taste for a temporary establishment.

Papa Rosen ventured a few remarks in his turn. Hotel life did not seem to him quite suited to the dignity of the house of Illyria. Paris, at this time, was full of exiled sovereigns, all of whom lived in sumptuous style. The King of Westphalia occupied a magnificent residence in Rue de Neubourg, with a pavilion for his retainers.

The hotel of the Queen of Galicia, in the Champs Elysées, was a perfect palace of luxury and royal style. The King of Palermo had a house finely fitted up at Saint Mandé, with many horses in his stable, and a whole battalion of aides-de-camp ; and there was no one, not even the Duke of Palma in his little house at Passy, who had

not a semblance of a court, and five or six generals always at his table.

"No doubt, no doubt," said Christian, becoming impatient; "but it is not the same thing. They will never leave Paris: it is understood, — a fixed fact; while we — But there is a good reason for us not to buy a palace, Friend Rosen. Every thing was taken from us in Illyria. Several hundred thousand francs with the Rothschilds at Naples, and our poor diadem, which Madame de Silvis saved for us in a hat-box, are all we have left. If I could only describe the marchioness on this long journey into exile, — now on foot, then on the sea, in cars, or in a carriage, — carrying her precious box in her hand! It was so droll, — so droll!"

And, his childish nature gaining the ascendancy, he began to laugh at their distress as the most amusing thing in the world.

But the duke did not laugh.

"Sire," he said, with so much emotion on his withered face that the wrinkles trembled, "you did me the honor to assure me just now that you regretted having left me so long far from your counsel and from your heart. Well, I ask a favor in return. While your exile continues, let me again fill the position held near your Majesties at Laybach, — the head of the civil and military service."

"See the ambitious man!" cried the king gayly. Then he added in a friendly tone, "But there is no longer a home, my poor General, — neither domestic nor military. The queen has her chaplain and two waiting-women; Zara has his governess; while I took Boscovich for my correspondence, and Master Lebeau to shave me: these are all."

"In that case, your Highness, I will make another

request. Will your Majesty take my son Herbert as aide-de-camp, and the princess here as reader and maid of honor to the queen?"

"It is granted on my part," said the queen, turning with her beautiful smile to Colette, who was enchanted with her new dignity.

As for the prince, he, with a charming neigh (a habit acquired by living at Tattersall's), thanked his sovereign, who brevetted him aide-de-camp with the same graciousness as the queen.

"I will present the three appointments to-morrow morning for your signature," added the general briefly, though in a respectful tone, indicating that he already considered that he had entered upon his duties.

On hearing this voice and this formula, which had so long and so solemnly pursued him, the face of the young king wore an expression of discouragement and *ennui*. Then he consoled himself by looking at the little princess, whom happiness beautified and transfigured, as is the case with pretty little faces without marked features, whose sole charm is their piquant and mobile expression.

Only think of it, — maid of honor to Queen Frédérique! She, Colette Sauvadon, the niece of Sauvadon, the great wine-merchant of Bercy! What would they say to it in Rue de Varennes and Rue Saint Dominique, — in those exclusive *salons* where her marriage with Herbert de Rosen had given her an *entrée* on days of ceremony, but never on a footing of social intimacy? Already her little worldly imagination was wandering in a court she pictured to herself. She thought of the visiting-cards she would order, and the new toilets, — a dress with the colors of Illyria, and rosettes to match for her horses' heads. But the voice of the king roused her from her dreams.

"This is our first meal in the land of exile," he said to Rosen in a half-serious tone ; and added, with intentional emphasis, "I wish my table to be gay, and surrounded by all our friends."

On observing the horrified look of the general at this brusque invitation, he added, —

"Ah, yes ! it is true, — etiquette and behavior ! But, dear me ! we have become accustomed to do without all that since the siege ; and the head of our house will find many reforms to make. Only I beg that they won't begin till to-morrow."

Just then the steward appeared at the folding-doors, which stood wide open, and announced their Majesties' dinner. The princess arose proudly to take Christian's arm ; but he offered it to the queen, and, without troubling himself about his guests, escorted her to the dining-room. All the court ceremony had not been left behind in the casemates at Ragusa, whatever he might say.

The change from sunlight to candlelight had a severe effect on the guests as they entered the dining-hall. Notwithstanding the chandelier, the candelabra, and two large lamps on the buffet, one could hardly see ; for the daylight, which had been shut out at this untimely hour, crept in, and made the room dim as at twilight. The general dreariness of the apartment was increased by the appearance of the table, which was very long, and out of all proportion to the small number of guests. The hotel had been searched for just such a table, which might answer all the requirements of etiquette, and at which the king and queen could sit together at one end, with no one at their side or opposite.

This filled the little Princess de Rosen with admiration and astonishment. In the last days of the empire, when

she visited the Tuileries, she remembered having seen the emperor and empress sitting opposite each other like *bourgeois* at their wedding-dinner.

"Ah!" said the little *cocodette*, shutting her fan resolutely, and placing it near her by the side of her gloves, "this is royalty. There is nothing like it." In her eyes this thought transformed this table, which resembled one of the *tables d'hôte* in the splendid inns of the Cornici between Monaco and San Remo in the beginning of the season, when the majority of the tourists have not arrived. There was the same variety of people and toilets, — Christian in a jacket, the queen in her travelling-dress, Herbert and his wife in a watteau of the boulevards, and the Franciscan robe of Père Alphée, the queen's chaplain, brushing against the gold-laced undress uniform of the general. In short, nothing could be less imposing. There was but one thing that was impressive, and that was the chaplain's prayer, calling down divine benediction on this first meal in exile.

"*Quæ sumus sumpturi prima die in exilio*," said the monk, with extended hands; and these words, slowly recited, seemed to prolong King Christian's short vacation far into the future.

"Amen!" responded the dethroned sovereign in a grave voice, as if in the Church Latin he at last felt conscious of the thousand sundered ties still quivering with life, like the living roots of uprooted trees, which exiles of all times have borne with them.

But this soft and caressing Slavonian nature did not allow him to long retain strong impressions. He had hardly seated himself before he resumed his gayety and indifferent air, and began to talk a great deal, out of respect for the Parisian lady speaking French, which he did



with great purity, though with a slight Italian *z* sound, which went well with his laugh. He related certain episodes of the siege in an heroic-comic tone, — of the court taking up their quarters in the casemates, and the absurd appearance which the governess, the Marchioness Eleonora de Silvis, made in them with her bonnet and green feather and her plaid. Fortunately the innocent lady was dining in her pupil's room, and could not hear the laughter provoked by the king's jokes. Boscovich and his herbarium next served him for a target. It seemed as if he were trying to revenge himself for his grave situation by indulging in nonsense.

The Aulic councillor Boscovich — a timid little gentleman, of no particular age, with rabbit's eyes that always looked sideways — was a learned lawyer with a passion for botany. When the courts were not in session at Ragusa, he spent his time in botanizing under fire, in the ditches of fortifications, — an almost unconscious heroism in one absorbed in a mania, and who, through all the troubles of his country, thought of nothing else but a magnificent herbarium left in the hands of the Liberals.

"My poor Boscovich," said Christian, to frighten him, "think what a splendid bonfire they must have made of those heaps of dried flowers, unless the Republicans, being too poor to do this, took it into their heads to cut up your big sheets of blotting-paper for fatigue-caps for their militia!"

The councillor laughed like the rest of the company, but with a frightened look, and a "But — but — but," which betrayed his childlike fear.

"How charming the king is! he has so much wit and such beautiful eyes!" thought the little princess, whom Christian bent over every moment, trying to lessen the ceremonious distance between them.

It was a pleasure to see her expand under his gracious looks, and play with her fan, and utter little exclamations of delight, and draw back her supple frame, which quivered with undulating waves of laughter.

The queen, through her attitude and the familiar conversation she was holding with the duke, seemed to be shut out of this extravagant gayety. Two or three times, when they spoke of the siege, she uttered a few words, and each time to proclaim the king's bravery and strategic skill; then she again kept aloof from the conversation. The general, in a low voice, asked after the people at the court, and his former companions, who, more fortunate than he, followed their sovereigns to Ragusa. Many remained there; and, at every name spoken by Rosen, the queen answered in her serious voice, "Dead! dead!" like the stroke of a funeral-knell tolling those recently lost. But after dinner, when they returned to the *salon*, Frédérique became somewhat more lively. She bade Colette de Rosen sit by her side on a divan, and talked to her with that affectionate familiarity with which she tried to bring people nearer to her, and which was like the clasp of her beautiful hand, — with the delicate touch of the fingers, but strong pressure of the palm, — which communicated its inspiring earnestness to others. All at once she said, —

"Let us go and see them put Zara to bed, Princess."

At the end of a long corridor — which, like the apartments, was blocked up with piles of boxes and open trunks, whose contents had been pulled out in the disorder of arrival — opened the room of the little prince, which was lighted by a lamp, with a screen lowered so that the light came only to the line of the blue bed-curtains. A servant was sleeping on a trunk, with her head enveloped in a white cap and the large *fichu* bor-



"Good evening, mamma! Must we run away again?" Page 19.



dered with pink, which completes the head-dress of Dalmatian women. Near the table, the governess, lightly leaning on her elbow, with an open book on her knees, also yielded to the drowsy influence of reading, and even in her sleep preserved the romantic, sentimental air which the king made such sport of. The entrance of the queen did not awaken her; but the little prince, at the first movement of the mosquito-netting which veiled his bed, stretched out his little fists, and made an effort to sit up with his eyes open, and gazed vacantly around. For some months he had become so accustomed to being taken up in the middle of the night, and hastily dressed for flight or a journey, and on awakening to see new faces and new surroundings, that his sleep was no longer regular and calm, — no longer a ten-hours' journey to the land of dreams which children accomplish, while breathing quietly and uninterruptedly, with their little mouths partly open.

"Good-evening, mamma!" he said in a low voice. "Must we run away again?"

In these resigned and touching words, one felt that here was a child that had suffered much from misfortunes too great for him to bear.

"No, no, my darling! we are safe this time. Go to sleep again: you must have sleep."

"Oh, I'm so glad I can! for I shall return with the giant Robistor to the mountain of glass. I was having such a nice time there!"

"His head is full of Madame Eleonora's stories," said the queen softly. "Poor little fellow! life is so dark for him. He has only stories to amuse him. His mind must be occupied with something else, however."

While speaking, she shook up the child's pillow, and

gently laid him back to rest with loving caresses, as any simple woman among the *bourgeoisie* might have done, which quite upset Colette de Rosen's lofty ideas about royalty. Then, as she leaned over to kiss her son, he asked from his pillow, if that was cannon or the sea grumbling in the distance. The queen listened a moment to a confused, continual rumbling, which at times shook the walls and rattled the window-panes, and was felt from the roof of the house to its foundation, — at times becoming fainter, then suddenly increasing and repeating itself afar.

"That is nothing: it is Paris, my son. Go to sleep now."

And the child, who had fallen from a throne, and to whom they had talked of Paris as a place of refuge, went to sleep again, full of confidence, though cradled by the city of revolutions.

When the queen and princess returned to the *salon*, they found a young woman with a very grand air standing and talking with the king. The familiar tone of their conversation, and the respectful distance which the rest of the company kept, indicated that it was a person of importance.

The queen uttered a cry of delight: —

"Maria!"

"Frédérique!"

And with one impulse they sprang into each other's arms. At an inquiring look from his wife, Herbert de Rosen gave the visitor's name. It was the Queen of Palermo. Being rather taller, and more slender than her cousin from Illyria, she seemed several years older. Her black eyes, and black hair turned back smoothly from her forehead, and her dark complexion, gave her the appear-

ance of an Italian, although she was born in the Bavarian court. There was nothing German about her except the stiffness of her tall, flat figure, the haughty expression of her smile, and an indescribable lack of harmony and taste in her toilet peculiar to women beyond the Rhine.

Frédérique, who was early left an orphan, was brought up with this cousin at Munich ; and, though they had been separated in after life, they retained a strong affection for each other.

"You see I could not wait," said the Queen of Palermo, holding out her hands. "Cecco had not come back ; so I came without him. I did so long to see you : I have thought of you so often ! Oh ! the cannon that night at Ragusa and Vincennes ! I seemed to hear it."

"It was only the echo of that at Caserte," interrupted Christian, alluding to the heroic attitude maintained a few years before by this queen, who, like them, was dethroned and exiled.

"Ah, yes ! Caserte !" she said with a sigh. "We, too, were left alone. It was pitiful. Why should not all crowns endure ? But it is over now. The world is mad."

Then, turning to Christian, she continued, —

"It is all one to me. I present you my compliments, Cousin. You fell like a king."

"Oh !" said Christian, pointing to Frédérique, "there is the real king of us two."

A motion from his wife checked him from saying more. He bowed with a smile, and, wheeling around, said to his aide-de-camp, —

"Come, Herbert, let us go and have a smoke."

And both stepped out on the balcony.

It was a splendid, warm evening ; the brilliant glow of day was not yet eclipsed by the dazzling gaslight with

which it blended in a dying glimmer of bluish vapor. A gentle breeze, like that from a fan, stirred the dense black mass of the chestnut-trees around the Tuileries ; and the stars were brightening the sky above. With this cool, open space, in which the noise of the crowd was unheard, the Rue de Rivoli lost the stifling aspect of Paris streets in summer ; but one still could hear the immense travel from the town to the Champs Elysées, and the open-air concerts under the showers of sky-rockets. The pleasure that winter shuts in behind the warm drapery of the closed windows sang freely, laughed, and ran, — the pleasure that young girls find in hats with flowers, floating mantillas, and light dresses, with the reflection of a street-lamp displaying a white throat, around which is fastened a black ribbon ; the gay throngs from the *cafés* crowding the sidewalks, and mingling their voices with the shouting of venders of ices, the jingling of money, and the clinking of glasses.

“This Paris is a wonderful place,” said Christian of Illyria, puffing out little rings of smoke into the darkness. “Even the air is different here from elsewhere. There is something exciting, intoxicating, about it ; and at Laybach at this hour every thing is dead, the houses closed, and the people gone to bed.” Then he added joyously, “Ah, now, Aide-de-camp ! I hope I shall be initiated into Parisian pleasures. You seem to me to be well posted and thoroughly launched.”

“Yes, indeed, your Highness !” said Herbert, neighing with pleasure and pride. “At the club, the opera, and everywhere, they call me the King of the Swells.”

While Christian was having this new word explained to him, the two queens, who had gone into Frédérique’s room in order to talk more freely, were giving their ex-



periences in long stories and sad confidences ; and their whispering was heard through the partly open blinds. Father Alphée and the old duke were talking to each other in a low voice in the *salon*.

"He is right," said the chaplain : "it is she who is the king, the true king. If you could have seen her on horseback riding at full speed day and night. At Fort San Angelo, when it rained shot, in order to encourage the soldiers, she rode twice round the ramparts, sitting proudly erect, with her riding-skirt raised over her arm and her whip in her hand, as if she were in her park at the residence. And you should have seen our sailors when she alighted. And he, during that time, was travelling Heaven knows where. He is brave, *parbleu !* as brave as she, but with no thought of his destiny, no faith ; and to reach heaven, as well as to save one's crown, Duke, one must have faith."

The monk was getting excited and grandiloquent in his long robe, and Rosen was obliged to calm him.

"Softly, Father Alphée ! Father Alphée ! come, come !" he said, fearing Colette might hear them.

She had been left to the company of the councillor Boscovich, who was entertaining her about his plants, using scientific terms in giving the most minute details of his botanical excursions. His conversation savored of dried herbs and the dust of an old country library. But then there is such a powerful attraction about nobility, its atmosphere is so deliciously intoxicating to certain little natures eager to breathe it, that the young princess, — this Princess Colette, — the constant attendant at balls in high life, races, and rehearsals, and always the first among the pleasure-seekers in Paris, — put on her prettiest smile while listening to the dry botanical classifications of the

councilor. It was sufficient for her that a king was talking at the window near her ; that two queens were exchanging confidences in the room by her side ; that this commonplace hotel *salon*, where her elegance was out of place, was filled with the grandeur and sad majesty which renders the vast halls at Versailles so gloomy with their waxed floors, polished and bright as the mirrors. She could have remained here in ecstasy till midnight, without moving or becoming wearied, feeling only somewhat puzzled by the long conversation Christian was holding with her husband. What grave questions were they discussing? what extensive projects for restoration of the monarchy? Her curiosity increased when she saw them both come in with lively faces, and a bright resolute look in their eyes.

"I am going out with his Highness," Herbert said to her in a low voice. "My father will escort you home."

The king then approached : —

"You will not be too angry with me, Princess, I hope. His duties have begun."

"Every moment of our lives belongs to your Majesties," answered the young woman, feeling convinced that some important step was about to be taken, — perhaps a first rendezvous of conspirators. Oh, if she too could have been one of them !

Christian went to the queen's room, but, when near her door, stopped.

"They are weeping," he said to Herbert. "A good-evening to them : I will not enter."

When in the street, he gave vent to his joy and relief, passing his arm under that of his aide-de-camp, after lighting a cigar in the vestibule of the hotel.

"Do you know, it is so pleasant to go off alone through the crowd, and to walk in the ranks like other men, to

be master of one's words and movements, and, when a pretty girl passes, to be able to turn your head round without all Europe being excited over it? That is the benefit of being an exile. When I was here eight years ago, I saw only Paris through the windows of the Tuileries, and from the height of gala carriages. Now I wish to know it thoroughly, and go everywhere. *Sapristi!* now I think of it: I am making you walk, and you are lame, my poor Herbert! Wait: we will stop a carriage."

The prince protested that his leg did not pain him. He felt strong enough to go where they intended. But Christian would not consent.

"No, no: I do not wish my guide to be foundered the very first evening."

He hailed a cheap public hack that was rolling towards the Place de la Concorde with a clattering of broken springs, and a cracking of the whip on the bony spine of the horse, and jumped in lightly, and threw himself back on the old, faded blue cushions, and rubbed his hands in childlike joy.

"Where shall I take you, my Prince?" asked the coachman, not knowing he had used the right title.

"To Mabile!" cried Christian of Illyria triumphantly, like a liberated collegian.

## CHAPTER II.

## A ROYALIST.

THROUGH a fine, piercing December rain, which froze on their brown woollen frocks like the points of needles, two monks with bare unshaven heads, and wearing the girdle and hood of the Order of St. Francis, were rapidly descending the hill in Rue Monsieur-le-Prince.

Among the changes in the Latin Quarter, — the broad gaps made by cannonading, which demolished the *souvenirs* and original character of ancient Paris, — Rue Monsieur-le-Prince still has the aspect of a student's street. Bookstores, cook-shops, coffee-shops, with those of *bric-à-brac* merchants and dealers in silver and gold, are alternately seen as far as the hill Sainte-Genève, which the students climb every hour in the day, — not those from Gavarni, with long hair escaping from their woollen caps, but future advocates, wrapped from head to foot in ulsters, and carefully brushed and well gloved, with enormous morocco bags under their arms, and having already the manner of cold, shrewd men of business. Besides these, there were medical students, rather freer in their ways, who, notwithstanding their studies of matter and of human beings, preserved an exuberance of life as a relief from their constant dealings with death.

At this early hour in the morning, girls in wrappers and slippers, with eyes swollen from late hours, and hair carelessly tucked into a loose net, were crossing the street to



Their absent eyes looked steadily in front. Page 27.



buy at the coffee-shops milk for breakfast. Some were laughing, and running along through the hail ; while others, on the contrary, were very dignified, and balanced their tin cans, and shuffled along in their old shoes and faded attire, with the majestic *hauteur* of fairy queens. Notwithstanding the ulsters and morocco bags, hearts of twenty must have their day ; and the students smiled on the fair ones.

“Stop a moment, Lea !” “Good-morning, Clemence !” they called from one sidewalk to the other, and made rendezvous for the evening “at Medicis” or “at Louis XIII.” And again, if the fair ones received too spicy a compliment, which they took amiss, they would burst out in a startling fit of girlish indignation, in the stereotyped form, —

“Go your way, you insolent fellow !”

It can be imagined that the friars’ frocks shrank from the contact of all these young people, who jostled them as they went laughing home, but laughing to themselves, for the appearance of one of the Franciscans was forbidding. He was as black, slender, and lean as a carob-pod, and had a terrible face under his bushy eyebrows, like that of a pirate ; while his robe, which his girdle confined in big, bulgy folds, revealed the loins and muscles of an athlete.

Neither he nor his companion appeared to notice what was going on in the street, whose atmosphere they shook off with their rapid walking ; while their absent eyes looked steadily in front of them, as their thoughts were wholly absorbed on the end of their journey. Before reaching the wide steps which lead to the Medical School, the oldest beckoned to the other, and said, —

“This is it.”

“This” meant a furnished hotel, of shabby appearance,

with a green gate, with a bell, opening into the passage which led between a newspaper-shop filled with pamphlets, and songs for two sous, and colored pictures in which the grotesque hat of Basile was repeated in a thousand attitudes, and a brewery on the lower floor, which bore on its sign "The Brewery of the Rialto," where the work was done by young girls in Venetian head-dresses.

"Has Monsieur Elysée gone out?" asked one of the fathers, as he went by the hotel office on his way to the first story.

A big woman, who must have gone into many lodgings before finding one to suit, lazily answered from her chair, without even looking at the row of keys dismally ranged in the key-rack.

"Gone out at this hour! It would be much better for you to ask if he has come in."

Then a glance at the woollen robes made her change her tone; and she pointed, in the greatest confusion, to the room of Elysée Méraut.

"No. 36, on the fifth floor, at the end of the hall."

The Franciscan friars ascended, and wandered through narrow corridors encumbered with men's muddy boots and women's high-heel boots, some of which were gray or reddish brown, and of either fancy, elegant, or cheap make, and which told the tale about the "inhabitant." But the priests paid no attention to them, sweeping them along with their rough skirts and the cross pending from their long rosaries; and they were equally indifferent when a beautiful girl in a red petticoat, with her bare throat and arms showing under a man's great coat, crossed the landing on the third story, and leaned over the bannister, and called a boy, with a thin, worn voice and laugh that came from a singularly vulgar mouth.



The two men exchanged a significant look.

"If he is the man you say he is," muttered the pirate, with a very foreign accent, "he has chosen peculiar surroundings."

The other, who was older, with a cunning, intelligent face, and a velvety smile of malice and priestly indulgence, replied, —

"Saint Paul among the Gentiles."

When they reached the fifth story, they were again embarrassed for a moment ; for the arch of the staircase, being very low and dark, almost prevented them from distinguishing the numbers on the doors, which were ornamented with placards as follows : —

"MLLE. ALICE,"

without any sign of her profession, which, however, would have been useless, as there were several of the same trade in the house ; and the good fathers knocked at one door hap-hazard.

"We must call him, *parbleu !*" said the monk with the black eyebrows ; and he made the hotel resound with the name of "Monsieur Méraut," shouted with a strong military accent.

No less vigorous and ringing than his call was the answer which came from a room at the end of the passage ; and, when they opened the door, the voice continued joyously, —

"Is it you, Father Melchior? No luck ! I thought I was to have a registered letter. But come in, your Reverences ! You are very welcome. Take a seat, if you can find one."

This was difficult indeed ; for over all the furniture were spread books, journals, and reviews, concealing the sor-

did, commonplace look of lodgings of the eighteenth order, with its dull tiles, tumble-down lounge, and the everlasting secretary of the Empire, and three chairs in dingy velvet. On the bed printed papers were lying in confusion with clothing and the scant counterpane. They were bundles of proofs, which the owner of the apartment, who was still in bed, was slashing with heavy dashes of a colored pencil. This wretched working-room, with its fireless chimney-place and dusty, bare walls, was lighted from neighboring roofs by the reflection of a rainy sky on wet slates ; which also revealed the forehead of Méraut, whose bilious, powerful face had the sad, intellectual light which distinguishes certain faces one only meets in Paris.

"My same old den, you see, Father Melchior. What can you expect? I stopped here on my arrival eighteen years ago. Since then I have not moved. There are so many dreams and hopes buried here in every corner, and ideas that I can find again under a coating of old dust, that I am sure, if I were to give up this shabby room, I should leave the best part of myself behind. This is so true, that I retained it when I went abroad."

"Well, what about your journey?" said Father Melchior, with a wink of his eye to his companion. "I thought you had gone for a long time. What happened? Did not the situation suit you?"

"Oh ! as to the situation, nothing could be more delightful," answered Méraut, shaking his coarse head of hair. "Appointments by a minister plenipotentiary ; lodged in the palace ; with servants, horses, and carriages ; every one charming to me, — the emperor, empress, and archdukes. But, notwithstanding all this, I grew weary. I longed for Paris, and this neighborhood above all ; and the fresh, live-

ly, stirring air we breathe here ; and the galleries of the Odeon ; and the shops where we fumble over new books with two fingers, or hunt for old ones, — those which are heaped up along the wharves, like a rampart sheltering studious Paris from the frivolity and selfishness of the other Paris. And then that is not all.” Here his voice became graver : “ You know what my ideas are, Father Melchior. You know what was my ambition in accepting that place as a subaltern. I wished to make a king of that little man, — a king who would be a king indeed, such as we do not see nowadays ; to elevate him, to make him over, and cut him out for this grand *rôle*, which surpasses and overpowers all others, like those arms of the middle ages which are hung in armories, and weigh down our shoulders and narrow chests. Ah, yes ! they were liberals, my friend, reformers, men of progress and new ideas ; that is what I found at the court of X——. Horrible *bourgeois*, who cannot understand, that, if the monarchy is condemned, it is better for it to die in combat, wrapped in its flag, rather than to end its days in a *ga-ga* chair pushed by some parliament. There was a great hullabaloo in the palace at my very first lesson : ‘ Pray, where does he come from ? What does the barbarian want of us ? ’ Then they begged me, with every kind of flattery, to keep to simple schoolmaster’s questions. A school-teacher, indeed ! When I heard that, I took my hat, and bade their Majesties good-evening.”

He spoke in a full, strong voice, whose Southern accent rung through every metallic cord, and his countenance became transfigured as he spoke. His face — which was enormous and ugly in repose, with a lofty forehead, above which was an inextricable tangle of black hair surmounted by a broad white tuft, with a thick, broken nose, a

harsh mouth not hidden by beard or moustache, and a complexion that had the burning glow, seams, and sterility of volcanic soil — became wonderfully animated with passion.

Picture to yourself the rending asunder of a veil, the lifting of a dark curtain from a fireplace whence suddenly bursts on your vision the warm, joyous glow of leaping flames, and you will have an idea of the flashes of eloquence lighting the eyes, and quivering on his nose and on his lips, and rushing with the blood from his heart, and illumining the face that had so long been dulled by excesses and late hours.

The landscapes of Languedoc — Méraut's native country, which is bare and sterile and dusty gray like its olive-trees — are bathed at sunset in a glow of a thousand hues from the fierce sun ; while fairy-like shadows sweep over these magnificent bursts of light and color, which seem like a decomposed sunbeam, the slow, graduated death of a rainbow.

"So you are disgusted with *grandeur*?" resumed the old monk, whose insinuating, expressionless voice formed so great a contrast with this outburst of eloquence.

"I am indeed," answered Méraut energetically.

"But all kings are not alike. I know one to whom your ideas" —

"No, no, Father Melchior. I don't care to hear any more about them. I would not make the trial again. If I were to see too much of sovereigns, I fear I should lose my loyalty."

After a moment's pause, the cunning priest veered off on to a new track, and introduced his subject through another door : —

"Your six months' absence must have done you harm, Méraut."

“Oh, no ! not very much. In the first place, Uncle Sauvadon remained faithful to me. You know Sauvadon, my rich man at Bercy. As he meets a great deal of company at his niece’s house, and as he wishes to engage in the conversation there, he has charged me to give him what he calls ‘ideas about things’ three times a week. He is charmingly *naïve* and confiding, the worthy man ! ‘M. Méraut, what ought I to think about this book?’ he says. ‘It is execrable,’ I answer. ‘But it seems to me — I heard some one say at the princess’s the other evening’ — ‘If you have an opinion of your own, my presence here is useless.’ — ‘No, no, my dear friend : you know very well that I have not an opinion.’ The fact is, he really has none, and blindly accepts whatever I say. I am his thinking-machine. Since my departure he has not spoken at all for lack of thoughts. And, when I return, you ought to see how he rushes to meet me. I have two Valaques to whom I give lessons in political law. Then there is always some odd work on hand. I am now finishing a ‘Memorial of the Siege of Ragusa’ from authentic documents. There is not much of my writing in it, except the last chapter, which pleases me pretty well. I have the proofs here. Do you wish me to read it? I call it ‘Europe without Kings.’”

While he was reading his royalist memoir, and becoming animated and moved to tears, people in the hotel were stirring, and youthful laughs enlivened it ; and the gayety of private pleasure-parties mingled with the clinking of glasses and plates and the broken notes of an old piano, which made the wood resound as some one played a popular dancing-tune.

It was a powerful contrast to the scene above, which the friars hardly perceived, being absorbed in the delight

of that rude and powerful apology for royalty. The great man in particular was trembling and stamping his feet, and restraining exclamations of enthusiasm with an energy that made him clasp his arms over his bosom tight enough to crush it. When the reading was ended, he arose, and walked rapidly up and down with a profusion of gestures and words : —

“Yes : that is really the true, the divine, legitimate, absolute right.” He spoke with a Southern accent. “No more parliaments, no more lawyers. May the whole lot be burned !” And his eyes sparkled and flashed like a fagot of Sainte Hermandad.

Father Melchior, who was calmer, congratulated Méraut on his book : —

“I hope you will put your name on it.”

“Not any more than I have the others. You know very well, Father Melchior, that my only ambition is for my ideas. The book will be paid for (it was my Sauvador who brought me this windfall) ; but I would have written it for nothing with equal pleasure. It is so pleasant to study the history of royalty in its death-agonies ; to listen to the fading breath of the Old World struggling and dying in its exhausted monarchies. There is a fallen king who has been a proud example to all of them. This Christian is a hero. These random notes are the recital of a walk taken by him under fire at Fort San Angelo. It was a daring act.”

One of the fathers hung his head : he knew better than any one what to think of this heroic deed, and of the still more heroic falsehood. But a will stronger than his commanded him to be discreet. He contented himself with making a sign to his companion, who all at once said to Méraut, as he rose, —

"Well, it is in behalf of the son of that hero that I have come to you with Father Alphée, an almoner in the court of Illyria. Will you take upon yourself the education of the royal child?"

"You will have neither a palace nor state carriages with us," said Father Alphée sadly, "nor the imperial generosity of the court of X——. You will serve fallen sovereigns, around whom an exile of more than a year, which threatens to become still longer, has brought mourning and solitude. Your ideas are ours. The king had some liberal notions; but he saw their worthlessness after his fall. The queen — the queen is sublime. You will see her."

"When?" asked the visionary, suddenly seized once more by the fancy of making a king by his genius, as a writer creates his book.

And at that very moment they agreed upon the next meeting.

When Elysée Méraut thought of his childhood, — and he thought of it often, for the strongest impressions of his life had been received at that time, — this is what he always saw: a large room with three windows, flooded with light, and each filled with a Jacquard silk-loom fastened into the window like a rolling blind, its network of meshes intercepting the light and the view without, which consisted of a mass of roofs and houses, with staircases on the outside, whose windows were all ornamented with looms worked by two men in shirt-sleeves, whose alternate motions resembled those of pianists in a duet.

Between these houses a few precious gardens climbed the hill, — gardens of the South, parched and faded, barren and stifling, and filled with coarse plants and gourd-vines; and where a tall growth of broad sun-

flowers, spreading towards the west with their corollas reaching to the sunlight, filled the air with the dead odor of their ripening seeds,—an odor which, after thirty years, Elysée fancied he perceived whenever he thought of his home.

The most prominent feature in this neighborhood—crowded and humming like a beehive—was the rocky knoll on which stood some old abandoned windmills—once the support of the town, now preserved for their long service—which stretched out their skeleton arms like gigantic broken antennæ, while their stones were loosened, and became the prey of the sun, the wind, and the corrosive dust of the South.

The whole *bourgade*, or the *Enclos de Rey* as they also called this part of the neighborhood, was and is now strongly royalist; and on the walls of every shop was found the portrait (in the fashion of 1840, with a bloated pink-and-white complexion, long curly hair, pomaded, and having pretty dashes of light) of him whom the villagers called among themselves Lou Goi (the lame man).

At the home of Elysée's father, underneath this picture, there was another smaller one, on which a large seal of red wax stood out from a sheet of blue letter-paper, with the words, "*Fides, Spes*," around the cross of Saint Andrew. From where he sat working his shuttle, the elder Méraut could see the portrait, and read the motto, "Faith, Hope;" and his broad face with its statuesque lines, like an old medal struck off in the reign of Antoninus, having the aquiline nose and rounded contours of the Bourbons whom he loved so much, swelled and grew purple under strong emotion.

This Méraut was a terrible man, violent and despotic;



and his voice was like heavy claps of rolling thunder, from his habit of raising it above the noise of the loom and the mob. His wife, on the contrary, was timid and completely put in the shade, never speaking at all ; being imbued with those traditions which make the Southern women of the old school like Eastern slaves. In this home Elysée grew to manhood, being more delicately brought up than his two brothers, because he was the last child, and sickly.

Instead of putting him at the loom in his eighth year, they gave him a little of the pleasant liberty which is so necessary to childhood, and which he employed in running around the enclosure all day, and playing battle on the knoll by the windmill with white against red, and Catholics against Huguenots. This party hatred is still seen in this part of Languedoc. The children divided into two parties, each choosing a mill whose crumbling stones served them for projectiles. Then invectives were hurled at each other ; sling-stones whistled through the air ; and for hours they waged Homeric battles, which always ended tragically by some bloody gash on a ten-year-old forehead, or a wound beneath some silky head of hair, which, when received in childhood on the tender skin, leaves a mark for life, such a one as Elysée now showed on the temple and in a corner of his lips.

Oh, those windmills ! How his mother cursed them when her little one returned at nightfall all in tatters and covered with blood ! His father scolded him for form's sake and from habit, in order not to get out of practice in using his thunder-like tones ; but at table he wished to hear the fortunes of the battle and the names of the combatants.

"Tholozan ! Tholozan ! There are still some of the race. Ah, the beggar ! I had his father under my gun in 1815. It were better had I killed him."

And then he told a long story in the rude, picturesque Languedoc *patois*, and spared no phrase or syllable in telling of the time when he enrolled himself under the Duke of Angoulême, a great general and a saint.

These recitals, repeated a hundred times, though varied according to his father's mood, left as deep an impression in Elysée's mind as the cuts from the stones of the mill did on his face. He lived in a royalist legend, in which Saint Henry and the 21st of January were the commemorative dates ; and learned to venerate the martyr-princes blessing the multitude with Episcopal hands, and brave princesses mounting their horses for the good cause, and who were persecuted, betrayed, and surprised in the trap of a fireplace in some old Breton hotel. And to enliven this tale of sorrow and exile, which would otherwise have left too gloomy an impression on the mind of a child, the story of "The Chicken in the Pot" and the song of the "Vert-Galant" were given, and filled it with glorious *souvenirs* and the lively times of old France. This song of the "Vert-Galant" was the "Mar-seillaise" in the Enclos de Rey.

On Sundays, after vespers, when the table had been propped up with great difficulty in the steep little garden, the Méraut family dined *au bon de l'air*, as they say in that region, in the stifling atmosphere which follows a summer's day, when the heat, which has been greatest on the ground and on the rough walls, is radiated more powerfully, and becomes more injurious to health than in the glare of the mid-day sun. At this hour the old villager would sing in a voice greatly admired by his neigh-

bors, "Long live Henry the Fourth ! long live the valiant king !" and every one in the enclosure kept still to listen. The only sounds to break the silence were the dry crackling of reeds along the walls, and the shrill whirr of some belated grasshopper, and the ancient royalist chant rolling out majestically to the measure of the Spanish dance, and recalling stiff *bouffants*, shoulder-knots, and hooped petticoats. The refrain was sung in chorus : —

*"A la santé de notre roi, — c'est un Henri de bon aloi.  
— qui fera le bien de toi, de moi."*

This "*de toi, de moi*," in the form of a rhythmical fugue greatly amused Elysée and his brothers, who pushed and nudged each other as they sang it, which brought upon them a scolding from their father ; but the song was not interrupted for so small a matter, and continued, through blows and sobs and laughter, like a chant of demons at the tomb of Pâris.

To Elysée, who always participated in family *fêtes*, this name of "king" had something familiar and homelike, besides the prestige given it in fairy-tales and "histories related to children."

This feeling was increased by the mysterious letters on very fine paper which came two or three times a year from Frohsdorf to the inhabitants of the enclosure, and contained autographs in fine writing, with big fingers pointing to where the king spoke to his people to bid them have patience. On these days Méraut would turn his shuttle more gravely than usual ; and at evening, when the doors were shut tight, he began to read the circular, which was always the same insipid proclamation with words as vague as hope : —

"Frenchmen, they deceive themselves and deceive you !"

And then there was the same fixed seal: *Fides, Spes*. Ah, poor people! it was not faith or hope they lacked.

"When the king returns, I shall buy a new arm-chair," said Méraut. "When the king returns, we will change the paper on the room."

Later, after his journey to Frohsdorf, the formula was changed.

"When I had the honor of seeing the king," he would say at every opportunity.

The good man had indeed accomplished his pilgrimage, — a real sacrifice of time and money for the village workman; and never a *hadji* returning from Mecca came back so dazzled. Yet the interview had been very short. The claimant said to the worshippers introduced to his presence, "Ah! is it you?" And no one had an answer for this affable reception, — Méraut less than the others; for he was choked by emotion, and his eyes were so blurred with tears that he could not even see the features of his idol. Only, when he was taking leave, the Duke of Athis, the military secretary, questioned him a long while about the state of mind of the people in France; and one can imagine how much the exalted weaver, who had never left the Enclos de Rey, could answer, —

"But let him come, the lucky rogue! Let our Henry come quickly, we so pine to see him!"

The Duke of Athis, delighted at this information in regard to the people's sentiments, thanked him heartily, and suddenly asked him, —

"Have you children, Master Méraut?"

"I have three, Duke."

"Boys?"

"Yes: three children," repeated the old villager.

(Among the people in that region daughters were not accounted children.)

"Well ! I will make a note of it. His Highness will remember it when the time comes."

Then the duke drew out his note-book, and — *cra* — *cra*.

This *cra, cra*, with which the worthy man described the gestures of the protector writing the names of Méraut's three sons, was invariably part of the recital recorded in the family annals, which were touching by their accuracy in the slightest details.

After this, in dull seasons, when the mother was frightened at seeing her husband grow old and the little household stock diminish, this *cra, cra*, formed part of the answer to the timid anxieties she expressed in regard to the children's future : —

"Make yourself easy now : the Duke of Athis made a note of them."

And, having become suddenly ambitious for his children, the old weaver, who saw his oldest sons already started, and rooted to the narrow path he had followed, built all his hopes and desire for grandeur on Elysée. He was sent to Papel's school, kept by one of those Spanish refugees who filled the southern towns after the capitulation of Marotto.

It was at the end of the butchers' quarter, in a house that was dilapidated and mouldy, as was plainly to be seen by its greenish window-glass, and the lizards adhering to its walls ; and it stood in the shadow of the cathedral.

To reach it, one must follow along the row of shops bristling with railings with lancelike points, from which hung enormous quarters of meat surrounded by unhealthy

swarms of flies, and a network of narrow streets with the pavements red and sticky with refuse-matter. In after life, when thinking of his childhood, it seemed to Elysée as if it had belonged to the middle ages in the time of the ferule and knotted rope of a terrible fanatic whose Latin in *ours* alternated, during the recitation of his squalid class, with the benedictions or harsh notes of neighboring bells falling on the apsis of the old church, its foundation, stone foliage, and grotesque gargoyles.

This little Papel — who had a very large, oily face, shaded by a dirty white cloth cap drawn down over his eyes to conceal a big, swollen blue vein, which divided his forehead from the eyebrows to the roots of his hair — resembled a dwarf in Velasquez' pictures, without the brilliant tunics and the severe bronzing of time. He was brutal withal, and cruel, but had a prodigious stock of ideas under his broad skull, being a living, luminous encyclopædia, closed in the middle of the forehead, one would have said, by an obstinate royalism, like a clasp, and which was well represented by the abnormal swelling of the strange vein.

There was a report in the town that the name of Papel concealed another more famous, — that of a ringleader under Don Carlos, celebrated for his ferocious manner of waging war and for giving variety to death. Being so near the Spanish frontier, his shameful glory embarrassed him, and forced him to live under an anonymous name. But what truth was there in these stories? During the many years that Elysée passed near his teacher, M. Papel, although he was his most intimate and favorite pupil, he never heard the terrible dwarf speak a word, or saw him receive a visit or letter, which could confirm his suspicions. Only when the child became a man and his

studies were ended — the Enclos de Rey being found too narrow a field in which to display his laurels and diplomas, and to satisfy his father's ambition, — it was proposed to send him to Paris. M. Papel gave him several letters of introduction to the chiefs of the Legitimate party, — heavy letters, sealed with mysterious arms, which seemed to invest the legend of the masked ringleader with truth.

Mérait ordered this journey; for he began to think that the king's return was too long delayed: and he stripped himself of every thing, and sold his gold watch and his mother's silver chain, and also the vineyard which every villager possesses. And he did this simply and heroically for the party.

“Go and look about a bit, and see what they are doing,” he said to his youngest son. “Why do they wait? They should know that the people in this place are weary of waiting.”

Elysée Mérait went to Paris in his twentieth year, overflowing with exalted convictions, in which his father's blind devotion was strengthened by the combative fanaticism of the Spaniard. He was received by the party like a traveller entering at night a first-class car which is half-way on its journey, when each occupant has settled himself in his corner to sleep. The intruder comes in from out of doors with his blood stirred by walking in the fresh air, and feeling a desire, which he would impart to others, to move about, talk, and keep awake; but finds that he clashes against the ill humor of people who grumble at him from the depths of their furs, having been lulled into drowsiness by the rocking motion of the train, and the effect of the dim light from the lamp shaded by a little blue curtain, and who, in their half-stupid state, dread nothing so much as draughts

and disturbing invasions. Such was the aspect of the Legitimist clan under the Empire, travelling in distress on an abandoned road.

This madman with black eyes and a thin, lion-like face, who emphasized each syllable like a satirist, and each period with strong gestures, was ready for every thing. Possessing the spirit of a Suleau and the audacity of a Cadoudal, he caused the party an astonishment that was mingled with fright ; for they found him dangerous and aggressive.

Under their excessive politeness, and the forced interest which their good breeding made them show, Elysée, with the clear-sightedness peculiar to the southern French, felt that behind their enthusiasm there was something selfish and cringing about them. According to them, nothing was to be done at present, but to wait, and, above all, to be calm, and to avoid being carried away by impulse and youthful enthusiasm.

“Look at his Highness ! See what an example he gives us !”

This advice recommending wisdom and moderation was quite in keeping with the old hotels in the faubourg, which were imbedded in ivy, and shut off from the sounds in the street ; and behind their massive doors, heavy with the weight of centuries and traditions, the inmates lived in luxury and idleness. Two or three times Elysée was invited through politeness to political reunions, which were held in great mystery and in great fear in one of these ancient nests of malice, every kind of precaution being taken. There he saw the great names of the wars of La Vendée and the fusillades of Quiberon, and all the funereal inscriptions in the field of martyrs, borne by good old gentlemen, who were partly bald and enveloped in velvety folds of



fine cloth like prelates, and whose voices were gentle, but always thick from mouthfuls of jujube paste. They would arrive with the air of conspirators, with all the importance of being tracked by the police, who, in truth, amused themselves greatly at these platonic rendezvous.

While, with heads shining like the brass counters, they were bending over a game of whist, played beneath the cautious light of tall, shaded candles, some one gave the latest news from Frohsdorf; and all expressed admiration for the unwearied patience of the exiles, and encouraged each other to imitate it.

But, hush! softly! They are now repeating M. Barentin's last joke about the empress; and again, on the sly, humming the song, "When Napoleon—giving you the stirrup-strap—will have cut your flanks unmercifully." After which, scared at their own audacity, the conspirators filed out one by one, and went creeping home, hugging the walls in the broad, deserted Rue de Varenne, which echoed their footsteps to their great disquietude.

Elysée saw plainly that he was too young and too active for these ghosts of ancient France. Besides, they were then in the height of the imperial reign; and the victorious eagles, returning from the wars in Italy, were marched along the boulevards beneath the flag-decked windows.

The son of the villager soon learned that the opinions held in the Enclos de Rey were not shared everywhere, and that the return of the legitimate king would be delayed longer than was supposed in that region. His loyalty was not affected by this; but his ideas became elevated and enlarged, since action was no longer possible. He dreamed of writing a book, and filling it with his convictions and beliefs,—with what agitated him, and

what he needed to say and to have known in the great Paris that he wished to convince. His plan was made at once,—to earn his bread by giving lessons (pupils were easily found), and to write his book in the intervals, which required much more time.

Like all the people in his part of the country, Elysée was a man of words and gestures. Ideas only came to him when he was standing on his feet, and heard the sound of his own voice, as thunder is attracted by the vibrations of bells. Nourished by reading, by deeds, and constant meditation, his thoughts, which flowed from his lips in a tide of words pouring forth one after another in musical eloquence, left his pen slowly, drop by drop, coming from a reservoir too vast for the measured filtration of writing, with all its niceties. To talk of his convictions relieved him, since he found no other way of giving them vent; and he therefore spoke to the *popottes*, in conferences, and also in *cafés*, especially those in the Latin Quarter, which, in the Paris that cowered under the Second Empire, when books and journals were suppressed, were the only places where opposition was offered. Each saloon then had its orator, and its great man. They said, “Pesquidoux of the Voltaire is very powerful; but Larminat of the Procope is much more powerful than he.” Indeed, all the learned and eloquent youth came there, repeating with greater spirit the fine political and philosophical discussions of the beer-shops of Bonn and Heidelberg.

In this noisy and smoky forge of ideas, where men shouted boldly, and drank more boldly still, the singular spirit of this tall Gascon, who was always inspired, who did not smoke, and who became intoxicated without drinking; whose rude and figurative language worked on

convictions as old-fashioned as panniers and powder, and as out of place in the surroundings where they were expressed as are objects of antiquarian taste among Paris articles, — quickly gained him fame and audience. When the gas was blazing in the crowded, noisy *cafés*, and his tall, ungainly figure appeared on the threshold, with its haggard-looking, near-sighted eyes, and hair tossed back in his effort to see plainly, his hat on the back of his head, and with some book or review, from which protruded an enormous paper-cutter, always under his arm, people would rise and shout, “Here is Méraut !” And they pressed close together to make a place where he could move his elbows, and gesticulate at his ease. As soon as he entered, the shouts and reception of these young people inspired him, in addition to the heat and gaslight which makes the head giddy and intoxicated. And on one subject or another — the newspaper of the day, or the book open under the Odéon as he passed — he burst forth, now sitting, now standing, holding the *café* with his voice, and attracting auditors around him with his gestures.

The parties at dominos stopped, and the billiard-players in the *entresol* leaned over the staircase with pipes between their teeth, and long ivory cues in their hands. The wine-glasses, beer-mugs, and the saucers trembled as from the passing of an express-wagon ; and the lady at the counter said proudly to all who entered, “Come in quick ! we have M. Méraut here.” Ah ! Pesquidoux and Larminat might be powerful ; but he put them into the shade. He became the orator of the place ; and the glory which he did not seek sufficed him so well, that he clung to it fatally. Such was the fate of more than one Larminat at that period, in whom fine powers were

wasted. They were motors or levers letting off their superfluous steam with great noise through the negligence, carelessness, or poor guiding of the fly-wheel.

With Elysée it was different. Being without intrigue or ambition, this southerner, who had inherited from his country nothing but her ardor, considered himself the missionary of his faith, and showed the indefatigable proselytism of the missionary, the independent vigorous nature, and the disinterestedness which makes light of the fees and prebends, and a life given up to the hard lot of the vocation.

After the eighteen years that he had been sowing his ideas among the youth of Paris, many of them who had reached a high position, when speaking of him, said disdainfully, "Ah, yes ! Méraut ! an old scholar." But they did all they could for their own glory by gathering the crumbs the singular fellow carelessly dropped from his table. Elysée knew it ; and when, under a great lord's green coat with palm-leaf figures, he again found any of his chimeras logically expressed in a fine academical phrase, he felt the disinterested happiness of a father who sees the daughters of his heart well married, yet has no right to their affection. It was the chivalric self-denial of the old weaver of the Enclos de Rey, with something grander still, since he lacked confidence in success, — that unfaltering confidence which the worthy father Méraut kept to his last breath. The very evening of his death — for he died suddenly of a sunstroke, after one of his dinners *au bon de l'air* — the old man sang in his loudest voice, "Long live Henry the Fourth !" When he was about breathing his last, and his eyes were dim and his speech thick, he still said to his wife, "Be easy about the children — Duke of Athis — made note " — And

with his feeble hands the dying man essayed to make "*cra, cra,*" on the sheet of his bed.

When Elysée, hearing too late of his overwhelming loss, reached home in the morning, his father was laid out, with hands folded, stiff and pallid in death, while the bed still awaited its new hangings. Through the shop-door, left open for the dead to pass, around which a large space was made, one saw that the looms were still, — that of the father abandoned, like the fallen mast of a ship against which the wind no longer blows; then the portrait of the king and the red seal, which had looked down on this life of labor and fidelity; and far above the Enclos de Rey, on the hill-top, one saw the old wind-mills throwing up their arms to the sky in an attitude of despair.

Never did Elysée forget the spectacle of that serene death which surprised the toiler at his labors, and closed his eyes to the familiar horizon. He was moved by envy, — he who was so filled with dreams and adventure, and was the embodiment of all the chimerical illusions of the fine old man sleeping there.

It was on the return from this sad journey that they offered him the place of preceptor at the court of X——. We already know his disappointing experience. His discomfiture was so great; the littleness, competition, and envious calumny with which he was surrounded, and the gilded splendor of the monarchy seen from too near a point of view in the corridors of its palace, so saddened him, that, in spite of his admiration for the King of Illyria, when the monks had gone and the first fever of enthusiasm was over, he regretted having decided so quickly.

All the disappointments he found there came back to

his memory, and he foresaw the sacrifice to be made of his liberty and habits ; then his famous book, which was always in his thoughts. In short, after long debates with himself, he resolved to say no ; and on Christmas Eve, when the time for the interview was approaching, he wrote to Father Melchior to acquaint him with his decision. The monk did not protest, but merely answered, —

“ Meet me in the Rue des Fourneaux at this evening’s service. I still hope to convince you.”

The convent of the Franciscans in the Rue des Fourneaux, where Father Melchior was treasurer, is one of the most curious and least-known buildings in Catholic Paris. This convent, mother of a celebrated order, concealed mysteriously in the wretched faubourg whose rumbling is heard behind the Montparnassus station, is also called “ The Commissaryship of the Holy Sepulchre.” It is there that monks in foreign garb, who pass through this dark, wretched district in their woollen travelling-suits, bring for the traffic in relics pieces of the true cross, rosaries of olive-nuts from the trees of the Garden of Olives, roses from Jericho, withered and fibrous, suffering for a drop of holy water, — a miraculous stock, converted into beautiful, silent, heavy money, to be carried in the large portable pockets of the hoods, and spent afterwards in Jerusalem for the care of the Holy Sepulchre.

Elysée had been taken to the Rue des Fourneaux by a friend of his, — a sculptor, a poor artist living in rooms, by the name of Dreux, who had just made a Saint Margaret d’Ossuna for the convent, and brought as many people as possible to see his statue. The place was so curious, so picturesque, and so congenial to his Southern convictions, as it united them — to save them from modern lucidity — to the most remote centuries and countries of



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tradition, that he often returned to it afterwards, to the great joy of his friend Dreux, who was quite proud of the success of his Margaret.

On the evening of the appointment, it was near midnight when Elysée Méraut left the noisy streets of the Latin Quarter, where the hot cook-shops, decorated butcher-shops and open provision-stores, beer-shops attended by women, students' lodgings, and venders of knic-knacs, of the Rue Racine and "Boul-Mich," gave out till morning the smoking odor of a universal feast. Without a change of feeling, he entered the deserted avenues where the passer-by, whose shadow is shortened by the reflection of the gas, seems to creep rather than walk. The shrill chimes of the convents rang out from behind their walls, bordered by skeleton-like trees; and the odor and rustling sound of straw, from the stables where all was asleep, came from the large enclosures of the milk-producers; and, while the broad street still preserved the vague whiteness of the smooth snow that had fallen in the day, the villager's son, who walked along lost in a dream of faith and ardor, fancied, that, among the stars that glittered brightly with the cold, he recognized the one that guided the kings to Bethlehem. On looking at it, he remembered the Christmas days of the past, — the beautiful Christmas days of his childhood, celebrated in the cathedral, — and the return through the queer streets in the butchers' quarter, outlined by their roofs and the moon, to the home-table in the Enclos de Rey, where the midnight supper awaited him with the three traditional candles in a mass of green holly with dots of scarlet, the *esterc-nons* (little Christmas cakes), and the deliciously smelling pastry and fried bacon. He was so absorbed in these memories of home-life, that the ragpicker's lantern mov-

ing along the sidewalk seemed to him to be that of his father, who was walking at the head of the party on his return from midnight mass.

Ah ! poor father, he would never see him again ! And, while he talked of the past in a low voice to the shadows he loved, Elysée reached the Rue des Fourneaux, which was a neighborhood partially built, and lighted by a street-lamp, and where were tall manufactories surmounted by straight chimneys, with wooden palisades, and the walls of which were made of materials taken from ruins. The wind blew with great violence from the great plains of the suburbs. From a neighboring abattoir were heard a terrified squealing and heavy blows, and a dead smell of blood and fat was perceived. It was there that pigs are sacrificed for Christmas, as in the festivals of some Teutats.

The large gate of the convent, which stands in the middle of the street, was open ; and in its court were two or three carriages, whose showy harness astonished Méraut. Services had begun ; and strains from the organ and choir came from the church, which, however, was empty, and dimly lighted by the feeble glimmer from the small lamps around the altar, and the pale reflections from the snowy night against the phantom-like window-panes.

The nave was almost round, and adorned with large red-cross standards from Jerusalem, which hung from the walls, and rather rude painted statues, among which the Margaret of Ossuna, in pure marble, pitilessly flagellated her white shoulders ; for, as the monks tell you with a certain affectation, " Margaret of our order was a great sinner."

The ceiling of painted wood, crossed by small beams ; the high altar, under a kind of dais sustained by columns ;

the choir, in a wainscoted rotunda of empty stalls, with a moonbeam playing over the page of the open hymn-book, — were left to the imagination ; for nothing was distinct. But one descended by a broad staircase, concealed under the choir, to the subterranean church, where — perhaps in memory of the catacombs — religious service was performed. At the end of the cellar, in the white masonry supported by large Roman pillars, was reproduced the tomb of Christ at Jerusalem, its low door and narrow crypt being lighted by a number of small sepulchral lamps in their alveoles of stone, which threw a flickering light on a Christ of life-size in tinted wax, the bright red of his bleeding wounds showing through the opening of the shroud.

At the other end of the cellar, like an odd antithesis, and embracing the whole Christian age, was displayed one of those childish reproductions of the Nativity, whose manger, animals, and Holy Child, surrounded by garlands of crimped paper in tender colors and leaves, are taken from the legend-casket every year, just as they originally came from the brain of a visionary, though perhaps they were then more poorly cut and much larger. As in those days, a file of children and old women, longing for affection and with a passion for the marvellous, — the poor whom Jesus loved, — crowded around the manger ; and among them, in the first row of the humble worshippers, to Elysée's surprise, were two men in secular dress and two fine ladies in dark toilets kneeling low on the flagging, one of them holding a little boy, around whom she clasped her arms, in an attitude of protection and prayer.

An old woman, breathless with admiration, said to him in a low voice, "They are the queens."

Elysée trembled ; then, approaching, he recognized the delicate profile and aristocratic bearing of Christian of Illyria, and near him the dark, thin face and youthful but bald forehead of the King of Palermo. Of the two women nothing was seen but the black hair of one, and the tawny hair of the other, and that figure of an impassioned mother.

Ah ! how well the sly priest understood Méraut, having, as it were, arranged a meeting between the young prince and his future governor !

These dethroned kings coming to render praise to God, who seemed to have hidden in that crypt to receive them ; this assemblage of fallen royalty worshipping in sorrow the star of exile guiding these poor magicians to a Bethlehem in the suburbs, with empty hands and without followers, — made his heart swell. The child — the child, above all — was such a touching sight, with his little head leaning over the animals in the manger ; the curiosity of his age being tempered by the reserve of sorrow. And before this brow of six years, where the future rested like the butterfly in its white shell, he thought how much knowledge and tender care would be necessary to make it bloom into splendor.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE COURT AT SAINT MANDÉ.

THE unsettled state of affairs in the Hôtel des Pyramides lasted just six months, and trunks were but partially unpacked. Bags were still unstrapped, and all around were the disorder and uncertainty of an encampment. Every day glorious news came from Illyria. Torn from her roots, and transplanted to a new soil, where she had neither past nor heroes, the republic did not flourish. The people grew weary of it, and mourned their sovereigns; and, calculating on a dead certainty, the exiles said to themselves, "Hold yourselves in readiness: it will be to-morrow."

They did not drive a nail in the apartments, nor move a single piece of furniture, without saying hopefully, "It is not worth while."

However, the exile was prolonged, and the queen soon felt that to remain in the hotel among a crowd of strangers, like a flock of birds of every feather with wings spread for a flight, would be contrary to the dignity of their rank; and they therefore packed up, bought a house, and moved into it. From wanderers they became fixed residents.

Their mansion was in Saint Mandé, in the Avenue Daumesnil, at the head of the Rue Herbillon, in the part that skirts the wood and is bordered by elegant houses with fanciful fences, affording a glimpse of gardens laid out in

gravelled paths ; and where the circular terraces and English lawns give the illusion of the Avenue du Bois-de-Boulogne. It was in one of these hotels that the King and Queen of Palermo, who had not a large fortune, retired, avoiding the excitement and the luxurious associations of high life.

The Duchess of Malines, the sister of the Queen of Palermo, had come to join her at Saint Mandé ; and both, without difficulty, induced their cousins to come to this place.

Besides the question of friendship, Frédérique desired to hold aloof from the gay excitement of Paris, to protest against modern society and the prosperity of the Republic, and to avoid the curiosity which is attached to persons of prominence, which to her seemed an insult in her misfortunes. The king at first objected to the distance of the house ; but he soon made it a pretext for his long absences and late returns. Finally, what decided the matter was, that it was less expensive living there than anywhere else, and their luxury could be maintained with but little cost.

They found themselves comfortably situated.

The house, which was white, and three stories high, and flanked by two towers, had a view of the woods through the trees in its little park ; while on the side towards the Rue Herbillon, between the servants' quarters and the hot-houses opposite, a broad, gravelled court extended in a circle as far as the terrace, which was covered by a canopy supported in the manner of a tent by two long, inclined poles.

There were ten horses in the stable, — draught-horses and saddle-horses. The queen rode every day. The coachmen in livery with the colors of Illyria, with pow-

dered hair drawn up on the top of their heads in the form of a hammer ; with a porter whose halberd and shoulder-belt of green gold were as legendary at Saint Mandé and Vincennes as the wooden leg of the old Daumesnil,—all constituted appointments that were sufficiently luxurious and almost new.

It was indeed but little more than a year before that Tom Levis had improvised, with all the decorations and accessories, the princely stage on which is to be played the historical drama we are about to relate.

Ah, Heavens ! yes : Tom Levis ! In spite of mistrust and repugnance, it was necessary to apply to him. This all-important little fellow had a most surprising tenacity and versatility. He had a bagful of cunning devices with many keys and picks to open or force rebellious locks, to say nothing of his many ways of gaining the hearts of tradespeople, valets, and chambermaids. "Above all, no Tom Levis," they always said at first ; but then nothing went right. The tradespeople did not deliver their goods in time, and the servants rebelled, until the day when the man in the cab appeared with his gold spectacles and charms, when the curtains hung down from the walls of themselves, sweeping the floors, and knotting and forming into complicated folds as *portières*, drapery, and thick, ornamental hangings. Fires burned in stoves, and the camellias held their heads up in the greenhouses ; and the owners, being quickly settled, had only to enjoy themselves, and sit in comfortable chairs, and await the bundles of bills which arrived from every corner of Paris. At the Rue Herbillon it was the elder Rosen, the head of the domestic and military service, who received the accounts, paid for the livery, and managed the king's small income so adroitly, that, with

their misfortune relieved by this gilded frame, Christian and Frédérique still lived freely. Both being sovereigns, and the children of kings, they did not know the cost of any thing, and were accustomed to see themselves represented on every gold piece, and to have money coined whenever they pleased ; and, far from being astonished at this comfort, they felt, on the contrary, all that their new existence lacked, to say nothing of the chilling void around their brows, where the lost crown had rested.

The house at Saint Mandé, so simple outside, was ornamented like a little palace within to no purpose ; for the queen's chamber, with its blue *lampas* covered with old Bruges, exactly resembled that in the castle at Laybach ; and the room of the sovereign was also identical with the one he left, and on the staircases were copies of the statues of the royal residence, and in the green-house was a warm cage for monkeys provided with climbing vines for the favorite *ouistiti*.<sup>1</sup> What were all these small details, so delicately flattering, to the owners of four historical castles and those summer residences between the sky and the lake, whose lawns extended to and disappeared beneath the waves, in the green islands they call "the gardens of the Adriatic" ?

At Saint Mandé the Adriatic was the little lake in the wood opposite the queen's windows, which she looked at sadly, as the exiled Andromache looked at her imaginary Simois. Restricted as were their lives, it happened that Christian, who was more experienced than Frédérique, was astonished at their comparative ease.

"This Rosen is incomprehensible. I really do not know how he manages to make the little we have suffice

<sup>1</sup> TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. — The *ouistiti* (a native of Brazil) is a small striated monkey.



for every thing." Then he added laughingly, "But one can be sure that he does not use any of his own money."

The fact is, that, in Illyria, Rosen was synonymous with Harpagon.<sup>1</sup> At Paris this reputation for closeness followed the duke, and was confirmed by his son's marriage, which was concluded in special agencies, and which all the prettiness of the little Sauvadon did not prevent from being a sordid *mésalliance*. However, Rosen was rich. The old Austrian officer, whose avarice was written on his profile, which was that of a bird of prey, had not waged war against the Turks and Montenegrins for glory alone. At each campaign his baggage-wagons returned well laden; and his magnificent hotel at the point of the Isle Saint Louis, very near Hotel Lambert, overflowed with rare things, Oriental hangings, mediæval furniture of the time of chivalry, massive gold tryptiques, sculptures, reliquaries, costly stuffs embroidered and worked in silver, and spoils from convents or harems, piled up in a suite of immense reception-rooms, which had been opened but once, — at the time of Herbert's marriage, when the fairy-show was paid for by Uncle Sauvadon, — but which since then had been locked, and were now gloomy, their treasures being preserved behind the tightly drawn curtains and closed blinds, without fear of a sunbeam being so indiscreet as to enter.

The good man, confined in one story of the immense hotel, led the existence of a monomaniac, being contented with two servants, a regimen of a provincial miser; while the vast kitchens in the basement, with their motionless spits and their cold stoves, were also closed like the gala apartments.

The arrival of his sovereigns, the appointing of all the Rosens to the duties of the little court, had somewhat

<sup>1</sup> TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. — Harpagon, figuratively speaking, means "miser."

changed the old duke's habits. At first the young people had come to live with him, their home in Park Monceaux—a true modern cage, with gilded bars—being too far from Vincennes.

Every morning at nine o'clock, no matter what the weather, the Princess Colette was ready to attend the rising of the queen, and stepped into her carriage, and seated herself by the general's side, while the river fog, which in winter and summer mornings lingered till noon at the point of the island, fell like a veil over the magic beauty of the Seine.

At this hour Prince Herbert tried to regain a little of the sleep lost in a hard night; King Christian having to make up for ten years of provincial and domestic life, and being so little able to do without the nocturnal Paris, that, when the theatres and *cafés* were closed, he found delight in walking the deserted boulevards, which sounded dry and resonant under his feet, or shone with water, while the street-lamps extended like a line of fire into dim perspective.

They had hardly reached Saint Mandé, when Colette went up to the queen. The duke established himself in the pavilion-cottage adjoining the servants' quarters, within reach of the servants and tradespeople. They called this the intendant's house; and it was touching to see this tall, old man seated in an arm-chair covered with moleskin, among heaps of papers, classified and labelled, and green pasteboard boxes, receiving and arranging little bills of the *bourgeoisie*, when he had at the Residence a houseful of decorated ushers under his orders. His avarice was such, that, even when not paying on his own account, each time that he had to give money every feature and wrinkle in his face contracted nervously, as if they had been

tightened with the string of a bag ; his straight, stiff body protested, even to the automatic gesture with which he opened the box on the wall. In spite of this, he managed to be always ready, with the modest resources of the princes of Illyria, to meet the inevitable pillage in a large house, the charities of the queen, and the liberality of the king, and even the pleasures which also formed part of it ; for Christian II. kept his word, and spent his hours of exile gayly. Constant at Parisian *fêtes*, received in the first clubs, sought in *salons*, his mocking, delicate profile, familiar in the lively bustle of stage-boxes or the gay throng returning from races, was now to be seen, in the medallions known by "all Paris," between the bold locks of a fashionable actress and the haggard face of the royal prince in disgrace who frequented the *cafés* in the boulevard while waiting for the hour of his reign to strike.

Christian led the idle, yet well-filled life of a young swell. The afternoons were devoted to tennis or skating, then the Bois ; at the close of the day a visit to a certain boudoir, which was then the *chic*, and whose atmosphere of luxury and great freedom of speech pleased him ; in the evening the minor theatres, dances, the club, and, above all, gambling with cards, in which one would see him reveal his Bohemian origin and his passion for staking his luck with all the consequent hopes and fears. He hardly ever went out with the queen, except on Sunday to take her to the church at Saint Mandé, and rarely saw her except at meals. Her sensible, upright nature thinking always of duty, he held in fear ; and her scornful coldness restrained him like a visible conscience : for it reminded him of his burdens as a king, and the ambitions he would forget ; and, too weak to rebel against this silent power over him, he preferred to lie, to avoid it, and even to fly from it.

Frédérique, on her part, so well knew this ardent, effeminate, vacillating, and weak Slavonian temperament ; she had so often pardoned the errors of this child-man, who retained every thing of childhood, — its grace, its mirthfulness, and even its cruel whims ; and had seen him so often on his knees before her, after one of his indiscretions, in which he had staked her happiness and dignity, — that she was thoroughly discouraged with the husband and man, even if she had any respect left for the king.

And this contest lasted almost ten years, although in appearance the household was very united. In high life, where one lives in spacious apartments, with a large number of servants, and surrounded by the ceremony which maintains distances and represses sentiment, such deceptions are possible. But exile would betray them.

Frédérique at first hoped that this hard trial would ripen the king's reason, and awaken in him those sudden impulses which create heroes and conquerors. On the contrary, she saw his eyes brighten with the giddy intoxication of pleasures, while a diabolic, phosphorescent light was kindled in them by his stay in Paris, and by opportunities given by his *incognito*.

Ah ! if she had but followed him in his mad rush through the Parisian whirl ; if she had allowed her beauty, horses, and toilets, to be the talk, and, with all a woman's coquetry, had lent herself to her husband's thoughtless vanity, — harmony might have been possible.

But she became more the queen than ever, and did not renounce any of her ambitions and hopes ; but, far from it, gave herself up to the struggle, sending letter after letter to friends at home ; protesting, conspiring, and informing all the courts of Europe of the wickedness of their misfortune.

The councillor Boscovich wrote from her dictation ; and at noon, when the king came down, she herself presented the papers to be signed.

He signed. *Parbleu !* he signed every thing she wished, but with a scornful contraction at one corner of his lips. The cold, mocking scepticism of the atmosphere in which he passed his time, had gained power over him ; and the illusions of his *début*, through a re-action peculiar to extreme natures like his, were followed by the settled conviction that his exile would be prolonged indefinitely. Therefore it was with *ennui* and fatigue that he listened to the conversations in which Frédérique tried to work him up to her fervor, looking into the depths of his eyes to find the attention she could not fix. Absent-minded, and haunted by some silly refrain, his head was filled with the last night's scene and the intoxicating, languishing whirl of pleasure. And what an "*Ouf !*" of relief he gave when he finally escaped out of doors, and how youthful and full of life he again became ! which always left the queen feeling sadder and more solitary.

After the morning's correspondence, and sending off some of the short, eloquent notes, in which she revived fainting courage and hopes, Frédérique's only diversion was to read from her own royal library, which was composed of memoirs, correspondences, and chronicles of past times, or of deep religious philosophy ; then she would play with her child in the garden, and take a few horseback-rides in the woods at Vincennes, and walks that were seldom extended to the line where the last echoes of the Parisian whirl died away on the outskirts in the part of the large faubourg where the poor reside ; for Paris caused her antipathy and ungovernable horror.

About once a month she would ride out in full livery,

and make a round of visits among the exiled sovereigns. It was a pleasureless excursion, from which she returned dispirited. Among these royal misfortunes, which were properly, nobly borne, she felt that there was utter abandonment and renunciation; that exile was accepted patiently from habit; and that they were led away by manias, childish trifles, or even worse.

The most dignified and the proudest of these fallen majesties, the King of Westphalia, — a poor blind old man, who was touching to behold, — with his daughter, his blond Antigone, maintained the pomp and outward appearance of his rank, but occupied himself only in collecting snuff-boxes, and filling glass cases in his *salon* with curiosities, — a singular mockery of the infirmity which prevented him from enjoying his treasures. There was the same despairing apathy with the King of Palermo, owing to a complication of troubles, sorrow, want of money, a disunited household, and ambition destroyed through the loss of an only child. The king, who was almost always absent, left his wife in her widowed and exiled home; while the Queen of Galicia, who had luxurious tastes and a passion for pleasure, did not change her wild ways when an exiled sovereign.

The Duke of Palma, from time to time, took down his gun to try and cross the frontier, from which he was often severely repelled, and again forced to endure the wretched idleness of his life. At heart he was more of a freebooter than a claimant, waging war for money and love, and causing his poor duchess all the emotions of the unhappy bride of a bandit of the Pyrenees, whom, if he stay out till daybreak, one brings home on a stretcher. All these dethroned ones had but one word on their lips, and one device, taking the place of the

high-sounding ones of their royal houses: "Why do any thing? Of what use is it?" The most polite responded to Frédérique's enthusiasm and active fervor with a smile; the women answered by talking about the theatre, religion, gallantry, or the fashions; and gradually this tacit lowering of principle, this weakening of strength, conquered the proud Dalmatian herself. Between the king, who no longer wished to be one, and the poor little Zara, who grew up so slowly, every thing seemed to be failing. The old Rosen talked but little, shut up in his office all day. The princess was only a bird, occupied incessantly in smoothing her plumage. Boscovich was a child, and the marchioness a simpleton. There was still Father Alphée; but this stern, frowning monk would not have easily understood the emotions in the queen's soul, — the doubts and fears that began to possess her. The weather also had its influence.

This wood of Saint Mandé, — bright with flowers and verdure in summer, deserted and calm as a private park during the week, alive with the joyous sounds of the people on Sunday, — as winter approached, wore all the gloom of a rainy landscape, and of the floating mists of its lake; having the desolate aspect, void of grandeur, of forsaken pleasure-resorts. Flocks of ravens flew over the dark bushes, and tall, gnarled trees, on whose branches the nests of the magpie swayed and the mistletoe swung.

It was the second winter that Frédérique passed in Paris. Why did it seem longer and more gloomy than the first? Was it the bustle of the hotel, the stir in the lively, wealthy city, that she missed? No; but, as there was less of the queen, the weakness of the woman returned with all the sorrows of a forsaken wife, and the home-sickness of a foreigner torn from her native soil.

In a glass-covered gallery adjoining the grand *salon*, of which she had made a little winter-garden, — a cool spot, far from the noise of the household, and adorned with bright hangings, and with green plants in every corner, — she now remained for entire days doing nothing, and looking out in the hollowed garden with its tracery of slender boughs, through which the gray horizon made a patchwork background, like that of an etching, mingled with the dark, solid mass of verdure which the holly and box preserved under the snow which their sharp branches pierced. The sheet of water falling from the three basins of the fountain wore a cold, silvery hue ; and, beyond the high fence along the Avenue Daumesnil, the steam-cars went screeching by from time to time, breaking the silence and the solitude of two leagues of wood, and leaving a train of smoke behind, which settled so heavily in the murky air, that Frédérique could follow it a long time, and see it gradually fade, slow and aimless as her life.

It was on a rainy winter morning that Elysée Méraut gave his first lesson to the royal child in the queen's little retreat, where she gave herself up to sorrow and dreams, and which on this day had the appearance of a study, with books and pamphlets lying on the table, and the light streaming in as in a studio or schoolroom. The mother wore a simple dress of black cloth, which fitted closely to her tall figure, and was seated near a small lacquered work-table ; and master and pupil — one as much as the other — were embarrassed at their first interview.

The little prince had a faint recollection of the large, imposing face which had been pointed out to him on Christmas night in the dim, religious light of the chapel, and which his imagination, filled with Madame de Silvis'



fairy-tales, likened to the giant Robistor or the magician Merlin.

And Elysée's impressions were as fanciful ; for in this frail, precocious, and sickly little boy, with a forehead as wrinkled as if it felt the weight of the six hundred years of his race, he imagined he saw a pre-ordained leader of men and of nations, and he said to him in a grave and trembling voice, —

“Your Highness, you will be a king some day, and you must learn what it is to be a king. Listen to me, and look at me attentively ; and, what my lips do not speak plainly enough, you will learn from my eyes.”

Then, bending almost to the floor to reach that little intelligence with fit words and images, he explained to him the dogma of divine right, — that kings were sent on the earth by God with a mission to the people, and charged with duties and responsibilities which other men have not, and which have been imposed upon them since childhood.

That the little prince understood perfectly what was said to him is hardly probable ; but perhaps he may have felt the warm, revivifying atmosphere with which gardeners who nurture a tender plant give life to the delicate fibre and sickly bud.

The queen, as she leaned over her embroidery, listened in delighted surprise to the words which she had waited for in despair for years, and which responded to her most secret thoughts, and gave them voice.

She had so long dreamed alone, and of so many things which she could not have spoken, and which Elysée put into words ! From the very first day, she felt in his presence as would an unknown musician, an unexpressed artist, before a skilful performer of his work. Her vaguest

sentiments about this great idea of royalty took form, and were unfolded grandly, and simply too, since a child — a mere child — could almost understand them.

While she looked at this man, whose noble features were animated with faith and eloquence, Christian's handsome, indolent face and irresolute smile rose before her ; and she seemed to hear the eternal "Of what use?" of all the dethroned kings, and the idle talk of princely boudoirs. It was this plebeian, this weaver's son, — whose history she knew, — who had gathered the lost traditions, and preserved the relics and the shrine ; and the sacred fire, whose light was visible on his brow at this moment, communicated itself to the ardor of his speech.

Ah ! if Christian had been like that, they would still be on the throne, or have both disappeared under its ruins.

It was very singular : observing Elysée, as she could not help doing, his face and voice seemed to awaken remembrance. Out of what shadow of her memory arose that brow of genius ? and from what secret recess of her heart came the accents which resounded in the depths of her being ?

Now the teacher began to question his pupil, not about what he knew, — which was nothing, or but little, alas ! — but to find out what he could be taught.

"Yes, sir ; No, sir," were the only words that came from the lips of the little prince, who exerted all his strength to utter them, in the timid, pretty manner of boys brought up by women, and retaining their childishness.

The poor little fellow tried, under the mass of varied information which Madame de Silvis had given him, to disentangle a few ideas of general history from among

the adventures of dwarfs and fairies glittering in his imagination, which was like a fairy-theatre. The queen gave him encouraging looks, and tried to aid him by her sympathy, as, when young swallows are leaving the nest, the mother-bird lends the support of her wings to the youngest which cannot fly.

When the child hesitated in his answers, the bright look in Frédérique's blue eyes deepened like waves in a storm ; but, when he happened to answer correctly, with what a smile of triumph she would turn to the teacher ! For months she had not felt such perfect comfort and joy. Little Zara's sad, dejected countenance seemed to her to have new blood under its waxen complexion, and even the gloomy landscape was brightened by the magic of the teacher's words ; and Frédérique saw in the bare, wintry waste only what was imposing and beautiful. As she sat leaning forward on her elbow, her thoughts soared into the future, where she had a vision of the child-king returning in triumph to Laybach.

Elysée, not knowing that he was the cause, trembled with wonder at her change of countenance. Around her beautiful pale brow he saw the shadow of her heavy crown of braids wreath itself in the form of a royal diadem.

It was noon, and the lesson still lasted. In the principal *salon*, where the little court assembled each morning at breakfast-time, the company were beginning to whisper, and wonder that neither the king nor queen made their appearance. Hunger and restlessness, caused by waiting for their repast, lent a certain ill humor to the low-toned conversation.

Boscovich, who was pale with cold and hunger, having been stirring about in the bushes for two hours to find

some late flower, stood thawing his fingers in front of the tall white-marble mantel-piece in the form of an altar, before which Father Alphée sometimes said private mass on Sundays.

The marchioness, who stiff and majestic, in a dress of green velvet, tragically sat on the edge of a lounge, drew up her head, and long, slender neck, which was covered by a boa, while talking confidentially to Princess Colette. The poor woman was in despair because her pupil had been taken from her, and confided to the care of a vagabond, — a real vagabond : she saw him crossing the court-yard that morning.

“My dear, he would have frightened you : his hair is as long as that, and he looks like a fool. It takes Father Alphée to find such creatures.”

“They say he is very learned,” said the princess absently.

The marchioness sprang up. “Very learned ! very learned ! Does the son of a king need to be stuffed with Greek and Latin like a dictionary ? No, no ! you see, little one, their education requires especial accomplishments, and I possessed them. I was fitted for it. I have studied the treatise of the Abbé Diguët on “The Education of a Prince.” I know by heart the different rules he gives for understanding men, and those for avoiding flatterers. There are six of the first, and seven of the latter. Here they are in order.”

And she began to repeat them to the princess, who did not listen, but sat dispirited and dull on cushions, over which swept the long train of her very pale-blue dress, made in the fashion of the day, and looked towards the door which led to the king’s apartments. She seemed to have magnets on the end of her eyelashes, and had the

pouting, disappointed look of a woman who has made a toilet for some one who does not come. The old Duke de Rosen, holding himself stiff and erect in his buttoned-up coat, was walking up and down with a step like that of an automaton, and as regularly as the pendulum of a clock, stopping first at one, then at the other, of the windows overlooking the garden or court-yard. As he looked from under his frowning forehead, he had the appearance of a ship's officer on watch charged with the responsibility of the conduct on deck.

And really the appearance of the ship did him honor. The red bricks of the servants' quarters, and the pavilion of the intendant's house, shone where they were washed by the rain which beat down on the clean piazzas and fine pebbly paths.

The gloomy day seemed positively brightened by the neatness of things, and to reflect light into the large *salon*, which was made cheerful by the comfort and warmth of the stove, draperies, and the Louis XVI. furniture in white and gold, with classical ornaments reproduced on the wood-work of the panels and looking-glasses. The latter were very large, and had a little gilded dial-clock fastened to one of them by ribbon-cords. In one of the corners of the immense room, on an *étagère* of the same period, stood a glass box, in which was kept the diadem saved from the downfall. Frédérique wished it to be there as a "reminder," she said. And in spite of Christian's railleries,—who thought it *rococo*, like a treasure from the museum of broken-down sovereigns,—the splendid jewel of the middle ages, with its sparkling, precious stones of embossed and open-work old gold, gave an air of ancient chivalry to the coquettishness of the eighteenth century, and the diversified taste of our times.

The rolling of a private carriage over the gravel announced the arrival of the aide-de-camp. Well, some one had arrived at last.

"How late you come to your duties, Herbert!" said the duke gravely.

The prince, although a tall young man, always trembled in his father's presence, and blushed, and stammered out a few excuses: "Very sorry — Not his fault — Duties to perform all night."

"Then that is why the king has not come down yet," said the princess, putting her sagacious little nose into the dialogue between the two men.

A severe look from the duke silenced her. "The king's conduct was no one's concern," he said.

"Go up to his Majesty quickly, sir! He must be waiting for you."

Herbert obeyed, after trying to obtain a smile from his dearly loved Colette, whose ill humor was far from being calmed by his coming; and she seated herself on the lounge, and smoothed her pretty, disordered curls, and the blue dress which was crumpled by the fidgetty movements of her childish hand. Prince Herbert had been playing the fine gentleman for some months; and his wife had insisted, that, as an aide-de-camp, he must let his mustache grow, which gave a formidable, martial expression to his pleasant face, which was thin and pale from late hours and the fatigue of his duties to the king. Besides, he still limped a little, and leaned on his cane as he walked, like a true hero of that siege of Ragusa of which he had just written a memorial, which was famous before it appeared; and which, read by the author one evening at the house of the Queen of Palermo, brought him a brilliant ovation and the formal promise of a prize at the Academy.

Think what a position and what power that gave Colette's husband, who none the less retained his appearance of a simple, timid, good fellow, especially in the presence of the princess, who continued to treat him with the most gracious scorn. So true is it that no man is a hero to his wife.

"Well, what is it now?" she asked, in a slightly impertinent tone, as he returned, looking stunned and overcome.

"The king has not come home!"

These few words of Herbert's produced the effect of an electric discharge in the *salon*. Colette, who became very pale, was the first to speak, and said, with tears in her eyes, —

"Is it possible?"

And the duke added sharply, —

"Not come home! Why was I not told of this?"

Madame de Silvis' boa bristled and wriggled convulsively.

"I hope nothing has happened to him," said the princess, in an unusual state of excitement.

Herbert calmed her fears, and told her that Lebeau, the *valet-de-chambre*, had been gone an hour with the king's valise, and he certainly would bring back news.

In the silence which followed, the same anxious thought passed through every one's mind; and the Duke de Rosen suddenly expressed it: —

"What will the queen say?"

Boscovich answered, in a trembling voice, —

"His Majesty told her perhaps."

"I am sure he did not," affirmed Colette; "for the queen said, a moment ago, that she would present the new tutor to the king at breakfast." And then she added be-

tween her teeth, with a shiver, and loud enough to be heard, —

“If I were in her place, I know what I would do.”

The duke’s eyes flashed ; and he turned round in indignation to the little *bourgeoise*, whom he could not succeed in crushing, and was apparently about to give her a severe lesson on the respect due a king, when the queen appeared, followed by Elysée, who led his royal pupil by the hand.

All arose. Frédérique, with a beautiful, happy smile, which had not been seen on her face for a long time, presented Monsieur Méraut.

Oh ! the salutation of the marchioness, mocking and lofty, which she had been practising for a week ! The princess had not strength to make even a gesture. From pale she became purple on recognizing in the new teacher the strange tall youth who sat beside her at breakfast at her uncle’s, and who had written Herbert’s book. Was he there through chance or some wicked plot ? What disgrace it would bring on her husband, and what new ridicule, if his literary fraud should be found out ! She was somewhat relieved by Elysée’s cold bow, who, however, must have recognized her.

“He is a man of wit,” she thought. Unfortunately all was compromised by Herbert’s innocent frankness, and his amazement at seeing the tutor enter, and the familiar shake of the hand which he gave him, with a foolish “Good-morning ! How do you do ?”

“Then you are acquainted with monsieur ?” asked the queen, who knew the history of “The Memorial” from her chaplain, and smiled, not without malice.

But she was much too kind to be long amused at another’s expense ; and, turning the subject, she said, —



"Really, the king has forgotten us. Please go up, and tell him we are awaiting him, Monsieur de Rosen."

The truth had to be confessed, that the king was not in the hotel; that he passed the night out; and they told about the valise. It was the first time such a thing had happened; and they expected an outburst from that proud and ardent nature, especially as the presence of a stranger made the mortification greater. But, no: the queen was unmoved. She simply said a few words to the aide-de-camp, to ask what was the latest moment that he had seen Christian.

"About three o'clock in the morning. His Majesty was going down the boulevard on foot, with his Highness the Prince d'Axel."

"Ah, yes! it is true. I forgot. They had something to say to each other."

In these quiet words she regained her calmness; but no one was deceived. Every one was acquainted with the Prince d'Axel, and knew what style of conversation this degraded nobleman and wicked high liver was capable of.

"Come, let us go to breakfast!" said Frédérique, with a queenly movement, and trying to inspire her little company with the calmness she forced herself to show.

She needed an escort into the hall, and hesitated, the king being absent. And all at once, turning to the Count of Zara, who followed this scene with staring eyes, and with the intelligent look of a precocious sick child, she said to him, with deep, almost respectful, tenderness, and a serious smile that he had never seen on her face, —

"Come, sire!"

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE KING ENJOYS HIMSELF.

THREE o'clock at night by the Church of Saint Louis en l'Ile. Wrapped in silence and darkness, the Hôtel de Rosen is sleeping under the weight of its time-worn stone-work and its massive, arched doors, with an antique knocker ; and behind the closed shutters the dim mirrors reflect only the sleep of centuries,—a sleep whose dreams seem to be the faint paintings on the walls, while the murmuring of a fountain near is the quick, uneven breathing. But the deepest sleep in the hotel is that of Prince Herbert, who has returned from his club, hardly more than a quarter of an hour ago, tired and exhausted, and cursing the troubled existence of a fast man, that he led in spite of himself, and which deprived him of what he loved best,—his wife and horses ; — horses, because the king took no pleasure in the active, out-of-door life of a sportsman ; his wife, because the king and queen, living lives so divided, saw each other only at meals ; and because both the aide-de-camp and maid of honor, following them in their divided domestic life, were as much apart as two confidants in a tragedy.

The princess left for Saint Mandé before her husband awoke ; and, when he returned at night, she was asleep, with her door locked. And, if he complained, Colette would answer him majestically, with a little smile in the corner of her dimples, "We owe this sacrifice to our sovereigns."

And thus was the loving Herbert defeated and left alone in his large room on the first story, the ceiling of which was four metres above his head, with the upper part of its doors painted by Boucher, and with tall mirrors set in the wall, which reflected his image in endless perspective.

Sometimes, however, when used up as he is this night, Colette's husband enjoys a certain selfish comfort in stretching himself out in his bed, without having to make conjugal explanations, and in resuming the effeminate habits of his bachelor-life, with his head wrapped up in a large silk bandanna, which he never dared to display before the mocking eyes of his Parisian wife.

The aide-de-camp, weary with his night-wanderings, is hardly in bed, with his head on the embroidered, emblazoned pillow, before a trap opens, and he sinks into depths of forgetfulness and repose ; but he is suddenly drawn out of it by the painful sensation of a light passing to and fro before his eyes, and a little sharp voice trying to work its way into his ear like a corkscrew.

"Herbert ! Herbert !"

"Eh ? what is it ? Who is there ?"

"Heavens ! be quiet ! It is I, — Colette."

It was Colette, indeed, standing before the bed with her *peignoir* trimmed with lace, open at the throat, and slashed at the sleeves, and her hair turned off from her face and twisted around her head, and with a nest of blond frizzle at the back of her neck. A small lantern cast a milky glow over her, and made her eyes, which were enlarged by a solemn expression, stand out from her face ; but they suddenly laughed at the sight of the scared, stupid Herbert, whose neckerchief got out of place and stood up in menacing points, while his face,

with its bristling mustache staring out from his night-dress, which resembled an archangel's robe, looked like that of a *bourgeois* rowdy awakening from a bad dream.

But the princess's mirth did not last. Becoming serious, she places her night-lamp on a table with the decided air of a woman who has come to have a scene; and without considering the vague, half-awake condition of the prince, she begins, with her arms crossed and her two little hands meeting the dimples at her elbows, —

"And you think this is the right way to live, — to come in every night at four o'clock in the morning? Is that proper for a married man?"

"But, sweetheart," — he suddenly stops, pulls off his bandanna, and tosses it away hap-hazard, — "it is not my fault: I would like nothing better than to return sooner to my little Colette, to my darling wife, whom I" —

As he said this, he tried to draw towards him the snowy *peignoir*, whose whiteness attracted him; but he was sharply repulsed.

"Really, it is of no consequence in regard to yourself. Eh? no doubt! People know you, do they? They think you a great innocent, incapable of the least — Well, I wish it were not as it is. But the king, — in his position! Think of the scandal of such conduct! If he were free, and a bachelor — Bachelors must amuse themselves. But then the elevation of his rank, the dignity of exile" — Oh, to hear little Colette, who raises herself on the heels of her slippers, and talks about the dignity of exile! "But he is married, and I do not understand how the queen — That woman has no blood in her veins."

"Colette!"

"Yes, yes! I know — You are like your father —

What the queen does is all right. Well, now, in my opinion, she is as guilty as he. It is she who has brought him to this, with her indifference and her coldness."

"The queen is not cold : she is proud."

"Ah, bah ! Is one proud when one loves ? If she loved him, the first night that he spent away from her would have been his last. One lectures, one threatens, one shows temper : but one does not preserve a cowardly silence before faults which kill. So now the king spends all his nights on the boulevard, at the club, and with Prince d'Axel. God knows in what company !"

"Colette ! Colette !"

But it is not an easy matter to stop Colette when once she is started ; for she has a ready tongue, like every woman of the *bourgeoisie* brought up in this exciting Paris, where the very dolls talk.

"That woman loves nothing, I tell you, — not even her child. Otherwise, would she have confided him to the care of that savage ? They are wearing him out with work, the poor little fellow ! It seems that in his sleep at night he recites Latin and a heap of things : the marchioness told me so. The queen is present at every lesson. They are both at the child, so that he may reign ! But they will have killed him before that. Oh, stop ! don't say a word about your Méraut : I detest him !"

"But he is a good fellow. He might have been very disagreeable to me, telling the history of that book ; but he did not breathe a word."

"Really ! Well, I assure you, that, when they congratulated you in the queen's presence, she wore a singular smile as she looked at you. But you are so simple, my poor Herbert !"

At the sight of her husband's grieved face, which had suddenly flushed, while his mouth swelled with a childish pout, the princess feared she had gone too far, and might not obtain what she had come to seek.

But how could one be hard on that young woman sitting there on the edge of the bed? — her head partly turned away, with a movement full of coquetry, which displays her youthful, pliant figure under the laces, the soft roundness of her throat, and the sly, provoking eye looking up from under its lashes.

The prince's pleasant face quickly became amiable again, and began to brighten in an extraordinary manner at the warm touch of the little hand left in his, and at the delicate fragrance which pervaded the atmosphere of the woman he loved.

"Ah, well! what did the little Colette wish to know?"

"Nothing of any consequence; simply a little information about something. Has the king mistresses? Yes, or no? Is it a passion for gambling which leads him away, or only the love of pleasure and absorbing diversions?"

The aide-de-camp hesitates before he answers. His companion on every field of battle, he fears that in telling what he knows he would be betraying the professional secret. Yet this little hand presses his so caressingly, so eagerly, that the aide-de-camp of Christian II. no longer resists.

"Well, yes: the king has a mistress just at present."

Colette's little hand, which lay in his, became damp and cold.

"And who is she?" she asked in a quick, breathless voice.

"An actress in the Bouffes, — Amy Féral."

Colette was well acquainted with Amy Férat, and thought her atrociously ugly.

"Oh!" said Herbert in excuse, "his Majesty has had nothing to do with her for some time!"

"Really?" said Colette, with evident satisfaction.

Thereupon Herbert, delighted with his success, ventures to touch a knot of satin ribbon fluttering at the throat of the *peignoir*, and continues lightly, —

"Yes: I fear that, some day or other, Amy Férat will receive her *ouistiti*."

"A *ouistiti*! What do you mean?"

"Why, yes: I have observed that all those who know the king as intimately as I, find that, when a *liaison* begins to weary him, he sends one of his *ouistitis* with a 'P. P. C.,' — his peculiar way of jokingly dealing with one he no longer cares for."

"Oh! is that so?" cried the princess indignantly.

"It is the pure truth. At the Royal Club they no longer say, 'Turn off a mistress,' but 'Send her one's *ouistiti*.'"

He stops, put out of countenance at seeing the princess rise suddenly, take her lantern, and walk straight away from the alcove.

"Why, why! Colette! Colette!"

She turns scornfully, and says, in a choked voice, —

"Oh, I have had enough of your hideous stories! They were repugnant at last."

And, lifting the curtains, she left the unhappy King of the Swells amazed, with outstretched arms, with his heart excited, and ignorant of the wherefore of this untimely visit, and this departure so like a gust of wind. With the rapid step of an actress leaving the stage, and holding her floating train in a crumpled mass under her

arm, Colette reached her room at the farther end of the hotel.

On a cushion of Oriental embroidery, in a lolling-chair, is sleeping the prettiest little beast in the world, gray and silky, with hair like feathers, a long, winding tail, and a silver bell fastened around the neck by a pink ribbon. It is a delightful little *ouistiti*, which the king sent her several days before in a basket of Leghorn straw, which she received gratefully as a mark of homage. Ah ! if she had known the meaning of the present. In a furious passion she clutches the little beast, — a bundle of living and scratching silk, from which sparkle two human eyes suddenly awakened, — and opens the window looking on the quay, and, with a fierce movement, cries, —

“There ! you dirty beast !”

The little monkey goes rolling down upon the lower wharf ; and it is not he alone who vanishes and dies in the night, but a dream as fragile and capricious as himself, — that of the poor little creature who throws herself on her bed, hides her head in her pillow, and sobs.

Their *amour* had lasted more than a year, — an eternity for this child just emerged as a butterfly. The king had but to hold out his arms : Colette de Rosen, dazzled and fascinated, fell into them. Till then she had been an honest woman, not for love of her husband or of virtue, but because in the brain of this bird there was a care for the purity of its feathers which kept it from falling on the muddy ground, and because she was a true French-woman of that race whom Molière, long before modern physiologists, declared to be without passion, and to be simply imaginative and vain.

It was not to Christian, but to the King of Illyria, that the little Sauvadon had given herself. She sacrificed her-



self to the royal diadem, which, through legends, commonplace and romantic reading, she saw like an aureole above the selfish and passionate image of her lover. She pleased him while he found her a new plaything beautifully colored, — a Parisian plaything, which would initiate him into livelier amusements. But she had the bad taste to look seriously upon the position of the “king’s mistress.”

The faces of all those women who had become partly historical, and all the paste from the crown that to her was more brilliant than real jewels, glittered in her ambitious dreams. She was not willing to be the Dubarry, but the Châteauroux, of this stranded Louis XV. The regaining of Illyria, and the conspiracies she would bring about with the tip of her fan, the surprises, and the heroic landing, became the subject of all her conversations with the king.

She saw herself rousing the country, and hiding in harvest fields and on farms, like one of those famous female brigands of Vendée whose adventures they were made to read at the Convent of Sacré Cœur. In her imagination she had already prepared for herself a page’s costume ; for the costume of a pretty little page of the Renaissance, who would gain interviews with the king every hour, and who would be his constant companion, always played the first part in her plans. Christian did not like these exalted reveries very much ; for he quickly saw the false and silly side of them. Then he did not take a mistress to talk politics with ; and, when he held her on his knees, — his little Colette, with her soft hands and rosy face, — reports on the recent resolutions of the diet of Laybach, or the effect of the last royal announcement, sent a shiver through his heart such as is caused by a

sudden change of temperature, like April frosts on the bloom of an orchard.

On account of this, he began to feel scruples and remorse, — the complicated, *naïve* remorse of a Slavonian and a Catholic. His caprice being satisfied, he now felt the hatefulness of this *liaison* carried on so near the queen, almost under her eyes ; and the danger of the hurried, stealthy rendezvous in hotels, where their incognito might be betrayed ; and the cruelty of deceiving so good a creature as that poor great devil of a Herbert, who always talked of his wife with unquenchable affection, and did not suspect that when the king met him at the club with a bright color, beaming eyes, and the look of a successful lover, that he had just left Colette. But his greatest embarrassment was on account of the Duke de Rosen, who held in great contempt the principles of this daughter-in-law, who was not of his caste, and felt anxious about his son, who, he considered, was a “cuck-old :” he said the word out plainly, like an old trooper, and considered himself responsible for all this, since his love of money was the cause of this plebeian marriage. He watched Colette, took her out, and brought her home mornings and evenings, and would have followed her all the time, if the supple creature had not constantly slipped from between his clumsy fingers. There was a silent contest between them.

From the window of the intendant's house, the duke, seated at his desk, to his displeasure saw his pretty daughter-in-law, in the most lovely toilets that she and her fashionable dressmaker could devise, wrap herself up in her carriage, looking like a rose through the frost on the windows when it was cold, or under her fringed sunshade when the day was bright.

"Are you going out?" he would ask.

"To wait on the queen" the little Sauvadon answered triumphantly from behind her veil; and it was true.

Frédérique went very little into the noisy part of Paris, and gladly left all her errands to her maid of honor, having never had the vanity of giving her name and title to a fashionable shopkeeper among a bowing crowd of attendants and curious women. Therefore she lacked popularity. They never discussed the shade of her eyes or hair in a *salon*, or the rather stiff majesty of her figure, and her careless way of wearing Parisian fashions.

One day, in the morning, the duke found Colette so really serious on her departure from Saint Mandé, and her *grisette* face so very excited, that from instinct (he hardly knew why, — true hunters have these sudden intuitions), he started after her, and followed her a long time — a very long time — as far as a famous restaurant on the Quai d'Orsay.

By dint of her imagination and skill, the princess succeeded in dispensing with the ceremonious repast at the queen's table, and went to breakfast with her lover in a private room. They breakfasted at the window, from which they had a splendid view: the Seine gilded by the sunlight; the Tuileries behind, — a mass of stones and trees; and, close by, the masts of the school-ship moving by the dark foliage on those margins of the quay where the opticians display pieces of blue glass. The day was just the kind for a rendezvous, — warm and beautiful, with a lively northerly breeze.

Never had Colette laughed so heartily, and her laugh was the pearly triumph of her grace; and Christian, who adored her when she would be the gay woman he loved, enjoyed the dainty breakfast in her company.

All at once Colette saw her father-in-law on the sidewalk opposite walking up and down with a measured step, and appearing determined to wait as long as possible, like a mounted sentry, at the door, which the old man knew was the only exit from the restaurant, and where he watched the entrance of fine officers in epaulets coming directly from the cavalry-barracks ; for, as a former general of the Austrian light infantry, he believed the military irresistible, and had not a doubt that his daughter-in-law had some intrigue with spurs and *sabretaches*.

Colette and the king felt great anxiety, which reminded one of the embarrassment of the *savant* perched on the palm-tree at the foot of which was a crocodile with gaping jaws. Sure of the discretion and incorruptibility of the servants, they knew at least that the crocodile would not come up to them. But how could they get away from the place? The king could remain ; for he had time to wear out the patience of the animal. But Colette ! The queen would be expecting her, and perhaps unite her suspicions to those of the old man Rosen. The proprietor, whom Christian sent for and acquainted with the situation, tried every thing, but found no other way to escape than to break through the wall of the next house, as in the time of revolution ; but he afterwards thought of a more simple expedient. The princess could put on the suit of a baker's boy, and stow away her dress and petticoats in the basket which she could carry on her head, and dress herself in her own clothing at the house of the barmaid in the next street.

Colette objected to this at first, — to appear like a scullion before the king ! but she was obliged to submit, or run the risk of the direst catastrophe ; and the freshly

ironed suit of a lad of fourteen years made the Princess de Rosen (*née* Sauvadon) the prettiest and most coquettish kitchen-waiter that runs about the streets of Paris at lunch-time.

But the white linen cap, the child's shoes in which her feet danced about, and the vest in whose pockets rattled the pennies received as fees, were far from resembling the costume of an heroic page, with a pearl-handled dagger and high boots, which she was ambitious to wear as she followed her Lara.

The old duke saw without mistrust two bakers' boys pass him, bearing on their heads baskets, from which escaped a pleasant odor of warm pastry, which gave him cruel pangs of hunger : he was fasting, the poor man !

Above, the imprisoned king, relieved of a great weight of anxiety, was reading, smoking, and drinking his Rœderer, and peeped out from behind a corner of the curtain, from time to time, to see if the crocodile was still there.

That evening, when the elder Rosen returned to Saint Mandé, the princess received him with the most ingenuous smile. He was aware that a trick had been played upon him, but did not breathe a word about the adventure. It got abroad nevertheless. Who knows through what cracks of a *salon* or anteroom, through what lowered window of a *coupé*, or by what echo reflected from a hollow wall to silent doors, a scandal spreads about Paris till it reaches full daylight, or rather the first page of the book of the world, and from it speaks to the crowd, enters millions of ears, and becomes the public shame, after having been the amusing anecdote of a club? For a week all Paris made sport of the story of the little baker-boy. The names, whispered as low as

is possible in the case of so great ones, did not penetrate Herbert's thick skin. But the queen had a suspicion of the adventure ; for, after a terrible explanation they had at Laybach, she never reproached the king with his conduct, but took him aside some days later as they were leaving the table.

"People are talking a great deal," she said gravely, without looking at him, "of a scandalous story in which your name is mixed up. Oh, do not defend yourself ! I do not wish to hear any more. Only think of this which is intrusted to your keeping." She pointed to the crown, whose radiance was veiled in its crystal box. "Take care lest shame or ridicule fall on it ; for your son must wear it."

Did she know all about the adventure ? Could she give the right name to the woman who was half betrayed by slander ? Frédérique was so strong, so thoroughly self-possessed, that no one around her could tell. But Christian felt that she knew ; and his fear of scenes and stories, the necessity of his weak nature to be surrounded by smiles to respond to his own perpetual light-hearted one, made him resolve to take the prettiest and the most cunning of his *ouistitis* from its cage, and offer it to Princess Colette.

She wrote to him after receiving his gift : but he did not answer, feigned not to understand her sighs or mournful attitudes, and continued to talk to her with the airy politeness which women loved in him ; and relieved of the weight of remorse which had grown heavier as his fancy died away, and followed by no more tyrannical affection than that of his wife, he threw himself unrestrained into the vortex of pleasure ; and, to use the hideous, weak, current language of the fast men, his only thought was

how he could "*faire la fête*." That was the fashionable term in the clubs that year. There is probably another one now. Words change ; but the famous restaurants where these things take place remain unchangeable and monotonous, — the gilded and garlanded saloons where fast women display themselves, and receive ; and where enervating, commonplace pleasures are degraded to an orgie, without power to give enjoyment again. What does not change is the classic stupidity of the crowd of fast men and women ; their stereotyped slang and laugh, without a gleam of fancy finding its way into this world, which, under its appearance of folly, is as *bourgeois* and conventional as the other. It is orderly disorder, fancies according to programme, and, at the bottom of it all, *ennui*, — nothing but yawning, fettered *ennui*.

The king, however, sought pleasure with the ardor of a twenty-year-old youth. He brought to it that longing to run away by himself which led him to Mabilie the very evening of his arrival, and satisfied his desires, which had long been sharpened by reading certain Parisian journals, which daily give the appetizing *menu* of gay life through plays and romances which relate and idealize it for provincials and foreigners. His *liaison* with Madame de Rosen stopped him some time on the brink of easy pleasure, which resembles the small stairs in night-restaurants, which, flooded with light and well-carpeted at the top, descend step by step in the first stages of intoxication, are rendered steeper at the foot by the fresh air from the open doors, and which lead straight to the gutter at the uncertain hour when scavengers and porters are around. Christian abandoned himself now to this descent, to this fall ; and what encouraged and in-

toxicated him more than the wines at dessert was the little court and clan of broken-down noblemen lying in wait for royal dupes which surrounded him; of fast journalists, whose paid reports amused him, and who, feeling proud of their intimacy with the illustrious exile, led him into the green-rooms of theatres, where women had eyes only for him, sparkling and alluring, and blushed with confusion under the paint on their enamelled cheeks.

Quick to take to the language of the boulevards with its ways, fashions, exaggerations, and caprices, he kept saying, like a perfect swell, "*Chic, très chic! C'est infect! On se tord!*" But he said it less vulgarly, owing to his foreign accent, which relieved the slang, and gave it Bohemian point. One word he was particularly fond of, — "*Rigolo.*" He used it on every occasion to express his opinion of every thing. Plays, romances, public or private events, they were, or were not, *rigolo*. That saved his Majesty from the necessity of reasoning. After supper one night, Amy Férat, who was intoxicated, and whom this word irritated, cried out, "Hallo! say *Rigolo.*" This familiarity pleased him. Th's one at least did not treat him as a king. He made her his mistress; and, long after his *liaison* with the actress was over, the surname remained, like that of "Queue de Poule" given to Prince d'Axel no one knew why.

Rigolo and Queue de Poule, who had become friends, were constantly together, and hunted their game in company, uniting their quite similar destinies even in boudoirs; the disgrace of the hereditary prince constituting a true exile. He passed it as pleasantly as he could, and for ten years had been dissipating in all the public-houses on the boulevard with the high spirits of an undertaker.



The King of Illyria had his apartments in the Hôtel d'Axel on the Champs Elysées. He at first slept there occasionally, but soon more frequently than at Saint Mandé. These explained absences, apparently necessary, left the queen perfectly calm, but threw the princess into deep chagrin. No doubt her wounded pride hoped to again capture this fickle heart. She employed a thousand coquettish inventions, new adornments and head-dresses, and combinations of cuts and shades in her dress, which harmonized with her changeful beauty.

But what disappointment for her when the clock struck seven at evening, and the king did not appear ; and when Frédérique, who was imperturbably serene, after saying, "His Majesty is not coming to dinner," would place the high chair of little Zara in the place of honor !

The nervous Colette, who was obliged to be silent and hide her displeasure, would have liked an outburst from the queen, which would have avenged them both ; but Frédérique, who was but little paler, preserved her royal calmness, even when the princess, with cruel feminine cunning, and insinuations cunningly introduced, tried to make revelations about the Paris clubs, the coarse conversations among men, the still grosser pleasure which they found in irregular habits and pleasures outside of home ; and about the fast parties, and fortunes crumbling away in the card-castles of the gambling-table, and the eccentric wagers recorded in a private book, whose pages were curious to read, — the golden leaves of sin. But her efforts were wasted : the queen was not moved by these tormenting spurs, and did not or would not understand.

She betrayed herself once in the morning, in the wood at Saint Mandé, during a ride on horseback.

It was a sharp, chilly day in March ; and the wind, stir-

ring the waters of the lake, drove them in ripples to the banks, which were still frozen and flowerless. A few birds were peeping through the denuded copse-wood, where remained red winter berries ; and the horses, filing side by side up a path that was filled with dead branches, made them crackle with a sound like that of new leather, which, with the rattle of their curb-chains, broke the silence of the deserted wood.

The two women, equally good riders, went on slowly, absorbed by the calm of an intermediary season, when a change is about to take place in the sky that is full of rain, and the earth that is still black under late snow.

Colette, however, every time that she found herself alone with the queen, soon entered upon her favorite subject. She dared not attack the king directly ; but she made up for it by talking about those around him, — the noblemen of the Royal Club, — all of whom she knew through Herbert and “*The Paris Chronicle*,” and whom, — the Prince d’Axel before all — she set off with the skill of an artist. Really, she could not see how one could keep company with such a man, who spent his life in gambling and feasting, who took pleasure only in bad company, and sat in the boulevard at evening by the side of some low character, drinking like a coachman with the first comer, and saying “*thou*” to low comedians. And to think he was the hereditary prince, and delighted in degrading and sullyng royalty in his person.

She went on and on with fire and anger ; while the queen, who was purposely absent-minded, and looked as if she did not hear, patted her horse’s neck, and urged him on a little, as if to escape the stories of her maid of honor. But Colette kept at the same pace.

“*Besides, there is some excuse for Prince d’Axel : he*

resembles his uncle, — a king who keeps his mistresses with such impudence before his court and his wife. One wonders what kind of sacrificing, slavish nature a queen can have who permits such outrages.”

This time the blow struck home ; and Frédérique, with veiled eyes and trembling, showed on her features, which grew hollow in a moment, an expression so sad and aged, that Colette felt touched on seeing the proud sovereign, whose heart she had never been able to wound, descend to the level of womanly suffering. But she soon recovered her pride.

“She whom you speak of is a queen,” she said earnestly, “and it would be a great injustice to judge her as you would other women, who can be happy or unhappy openly, and shed all their tears, and cry out if the pain is too great. But queens, whether theirs be the sorrow of wife or mother, must conceal and stifle all. Can a queen run away when she is wronged? Can she plead for a separation, and give that joy to the enemies of the throne? No ; at the risk of appearing cruel, blind, and indifferent, she must hold her head erect to wear her crown. And it is not vain pride, but the true feeling of our lofty position, which sustains us. It is that which makes us ride out in an open carriage between husband and child, with threats in the air of a conspiracy, and shots that may be fired at us ; it is that which makes this exile and leaden sky less heavy, and also gives us strength to endure certain cruel affronts, of which you should be the last to speak to me, Princess de Rosen.”

She became animated as she spoke, and hurried to finish, then whipped up her horse with a vigorous “Hep !” which sent him through the Bois, like the wind, in a mad, dizzy flight, making her blue veil flap, and the folds of her riding-dress rustle.

After this, Colette left the queen in peace : but as she needed a distraction for her nerves, and some relief, she turned her anger and attacks on Elysée, and placed herself on the marchioness's side ; for the royal house was divided into two factions. Elysée usually had no one on his side but Father Alphée, whose rude speech and ready wit were a great support ; but the monk made frequent visits to Illyria, being charged with missions between the mother convent in the Rue des Fourneaux and the Franciscan convents of Zara and Ragusa. At least this was the pretext for his absences, which were accompanied by the greatest mystery, and from which he returned more ardent than ever, climbing the stairs with furious strides, rolling his rosary between his fingers, and mumbling a prayer between his teeth.

He shut himself up with the queen for hours ; then, after two or three days' rest, he would go off again, leaving all the marchioness's *coterie* boldly leagued against the tutor. From the old duke, whose military discipline and social ideas were shocked by Méraut's careless dress and rumpled hair, to Lebeau the *valet-de-chambre*, the instinctive enemy of independence, and to the most humble groom or kitchen-boy of Monsieur Lebeau, and also to the inoffensive Boscovich, who did like the others from his own weakness and respect for numbers, there was a complete coalition against the new teacher. It was manifested less by acts than by words, looks, and attitudes in the little nervous skirmishes which every-day life brings between people who detest each other. Oh, the attitudes which were a specialty with Madame de Silvis ! Disdainful, haughty, ironical, and bitter, she made her features expressive before Elysée, and succeeded in patiently assuming a kind of respectful pity, and stifled

sighs, and cast pale glances at the ceiling every time she found herself with the little prince. "Are you not suffering, your Highness?" And she would feel of his long, slender fingers, making him feel languid by trembling caresses. Then the queen would say, in a joyous voice, —

"Come, come, Marchioness! you would make Zara think he is ill."

"I find his hands and forehead rather warm."

"He has just come in from out of doors. It is the fresh air."

The queen carried away the child, and felt troubled by the remarks made in her presence, — the talk of the house that they were making his Highness work too much, and which the Parisian servants repeated without believing it, but which was taken seriously by those brought from Illyria, — the great Petscha and old Greb, — who looked threateningly at M é r a u t, and hectored him with that silent expression of disgust with service which is so easy to practise against dependants and absent-minded men.

Elysée again found the persecutions, littleness, and jealousies of the Palace of X——; the same grumbling of servile souls around thrones, — from which it seems exile and a fall do not free them. His nature, which was too generous and too affectionate not to suffer from this shrinking antipathy, felt annoyed, as his simple, daily habits and Bohemian artistic ways became restricted in the forced ceremony of the house; in the repasts lighted by tall candelabra, where the men, and the women who were always dressed in low-necked dresses, sat around the table, which was enlarged by the distance between the guests; and he did not speak or eat till the king and queen had eaten and spoken. They were also governed by the implacable etiquette which the civil and military head

of the house maintained with more severity during the exile.

It happened, however, that the old student in the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince sat at table in a colored cravat, spoke without permission, and launched forth into one of those elegant improvisations with which the walls of the Café Voltaire still resounded. Then the looks of thunder which he drew upon himself, and the importance which the least infraction of the rules of the little court assumed, caused him a great desire to let every thing go, and return quickly to the *quartier*, as he had done once before.

Only the queen was there.

From having lived in intimate companionship with Frédérique, with the child in their company, he had been inspired with a fanatical devotion mingled with respect, admiration, and superstitious faith. In his eyes she expressed and symbolized all his belief, and the monarchical ideal, as the Madonna is the symbol of religion to a peasant from the Transtévère. It was for the queen that he remained, and found courage to go on with his hard task. Oh, yes ! it was very hard, and required great patience ; for it was difficult to instil the least thing into the mind of this child-king. But this poor Zara was charming, gentle, and good, and did not lack will. One could see that he possessed the serious, upright soul of his mother, with an indescribable weakness and capriciousness, and that he was too backward for his age. The mind was visibly undeveloped in his little, old, stunted body, which play never tempted, and which was burdened by reveries which often ended in torpor. Lulled to sleep during his infancy — which to him was only a long convalescence — by the fanciful nonsense of his

governess, the life which he began to have a glimpse of impressed him only by its resemblance to that of those stories in which fairies and good spirits were mixed up with kings and queens, and who released them from dreadful towers and dungeons, and delivered them from persecutions and snares with a wave of their golden wand, removing glass walls, ramparts of thorns, and the dragons which send forth fire, and the old women who turn one into a beast. In a lesson, in the middle of a difficult explanation they gave him, he would say, "That is like the story of the little tailor;" or, if he were reading about a great battle, "The giant Robistor killed a great many more than that." It was the love of the supernatural so strongly developed in him which gave him his absent expression, and made him remain motionless for hours buried in the cushions of a lounge, while in the depths of his eyes floated the changing phantoms and deceptive glamour likely to follow a child after reading the *Rothomago*, whose fable was passing through his memory in wonderful colored pictures. And this made reasoning and the serious study which was required of him very difficult.

The queen was present at every lesson, with a piece of embroidery, which did not progress very fast, in her hand; and in her beautiful eyes the attentive look so prized by the master, who felt it influence all his thoughts, even those which he did not express. It was thus, above all, that they were held together by dreams, fancies, and what floats above convictions and expands them. She had taken him for an adviser and confidant, feigning to talk to him only in the name of the king.

"Monsieur M é r a u t, his Majesty would like to have your opinion about this."

Elysée was greatly astonished at never hearing the king talk to him on these matters which interested him so much. He addressed him familiarly, as he would a comrade ; which was delightful, but little to the purpose. Sometimes, as he crossed the study, he would stop a moment to listen to the lesson, and, placing his hand on the prince's shoulder, would say in an undertone, which sounded like an echo of the servants' talk, "You would not make a *savant* of him, I hope."

"I wish to make a king of him," replied Frédérique proudly. And, when her husband showed doubt, she added, "Is he not to reign some day?"

"Oh, yes, yes !" he answered.

And with a low bow, closing the door behind him to cut short all discussion, he went off whistling the air of a fashionable light opera : "He will reign — he will reign — for he is a Spaniard."

On the whole, Elysée hardly knew what to make of this hospitable, superficial sovereign and perfumed flirt, full of caprices, who lolled languidly on lounges, and whom he believed to be the hero of Ragusa, the king of energetic will and bravery, as "The Memorial" described him.

But, in spite of Frédérique's skill in masking the emptiness behind this crowned brow, and although she herself kept in the background, some unforeseen circumstance always presented itself to show their true natures.

One morning after breakfast, just as they had entered the *salon*, Frédérique, on looking over the newspaper, — "The Illyrian Courier," which she was always the first to read, — gave such a loud, grieved cry, that the king, who was about leaving the room, stopped, while every one gathered around the queen, who passed the paper to Boscovich.

"Read !" she said.



There was an account of the meeting of the Diet at Laybach, and the resolutions which had been passed to restore all the property of the crown to the exiled sovereigns, to the amount of more than two hundred million, on the expressed condition —

“Bravo !” cried Christian, in his nasal voice : “that just suits me.”

“Go on !” said the queen severely.

“On the expressed condition that Christian II. would renounce, for himself and descendants, all his right to the throne of Illyria.”

They all cried out in indignation. The elder Rosen choked, and Father Alphée’s cheeks became as white as a sheet, which made his beard and eyes seem all the blacker.

“This must be answered : we must not endure this,” said the queen ; and in her indignation she looked at Méraut, who was nervously scribbling on a corner of the table.

“This is what I would write,” said he, coming forward ; and he read, in the form of a letter to a royalist deputy, a haughty proclamation to the Illyrian people, in which, after having rejected the outrageous proposition which was made to him, the king encouraged and re-assured his friends in the feeling words of a head of a family parted from his children.

The queen clapped her hands enthusiastically, seized the paper, and held it out to Boscovich.

“Quick, quick ! translate, and send it off. Is not that your advice ?” she added, turning to Christian, as she remembered that he was there, and that people were looking at them.

“Certainly, certainly,” said the king, very much per-

plexed, and biting his nails in fury. "All that is very fine. Only the question is whether we can hold out."

The queen turned quickly round, looking very pale, and as if she had received a heavy blow between her shoulders.

"Hold out ! whether we can hold out ! Is it the king who speaks ?"

"When Ragusa wanted bread, with the very best will in the world we were obliged to surrender," he answered very calmly.

"Well, this time, if we want for bread, we will take a basket, and beg it from door to door ; but royalty will never surrender."

What a scene it was which took place in this small *salon* in the outskirts of Paris, — this debate between two fallen sovereigns ! one of whom, one felt, was weary of the struggle, and paralyzed for lack of faith ; while the other was exalted with ardor and faith. A mere glance revealed their opposite natures. On the one hand was the king, with his supple, delicate figure, and bare throat, and his garments hanging loosely upon him, and his soft character plainly apparent in the effeminate drooping of his pale hands, and in the damp, curly hair on his forehead ; and on the other was the queen's slender form, superb in her riding-dress with broad lapels, a small, upright collar, and simple cuffs bordering her dark costume, which brought out her bright complexion, sparkling eyes, and golden braids. Elysée for the first time had a clear, fleeting vision of what was passing in this royal household.

"Rosen !" said Christian II. suddenly, turning to the duke, who stood leaning against the mantel-piece, with his head hung down.

"Sire?"

"It is you alone who can tell us this. How is it with us? Can we hold out any longer?"

The chief of the house said, with a haughty gesture, —

"Certainly."

"How long? Can you tell pretty nearly?"

"Five years: I have reckoned it."

"Without privations for any one? without the suffering or injury of those whom we love?"

"Yes, sire."

"You are sure of it?"

"Sure," affirmed the old man, drawing up his tall figure.

"Well, that is right. Méraut, give me your letter, that I may sign it before I go out." Then he said in a low voice, taking the pen from his hands, —

"But look at Madame de Silvis. Would not one say that she was about to sing '*La Sombre Forêt*'?"

The marchioness, who was just then entering from the garden with the little prince, gave the room the appearance of a scene in a drama. With her cap adorned with a green feather, and wearing a velvet spencer, and with her hand on her heart, she stopped, with a sudden stage *pose* of romantic surprise, like a *prima donna* in a *cavatina* in the opera.

Having been read in full parliament, and published by all the journals, the protestation, at Elysée's advice, was autographed, and thousands of copies sent about the country, carried in packages, and passed by the custom-house officers as *articles of charity*, with rosaries of olive-nuts, and roses from Jericho. It was the means of spurring royalist opinions. Dalmatia, in particular, where republican ideas had not widely spread, was greatly

moved at hearing her king's eloquent words, which in many villages were delivered from the pulpit, and distributed by the Franciscan monks appointed to ask charity, and who opened their baskets at farmhouse-doors, and received eggs and butter in payment for a small printed package. Soon addresses were covered with signatures and crosses, the touching proofs of ignorant good will ; and pilgrimages were organized.

In the little house at Saint Mandé there were arrivals of fishermen, and some porters from Ragusa with black coats over their rich Mussulmans' costume, and Morlaque peasants three-quarters barbarians, and all shod with the sheepskin *opanké* fastened on the feet with straw thongs. They got out of the cars in bands ; and the scarlet Dalmatian tunics, fringed scarfs, and waistcoats with metal buttons clashed against the gray uniformity of the Parisian dress. They crossed the court-yard with a firm step ; then stopped at the vestibule, consulted with each other in a low voice as if excited and intimidated.

Mérait, who was present at all these presentations, felt moved to the depths of his being. The legend of his childhood was revived by the enthusiasm that led them to such a distance : and the journey to Frohsdorf made by the villagers in the Enclos de Rey, their privations and preparations for departure, and their unconfessed disappointment on their return, came back to his memory ; while he suffered from Christian's indifferent manner, and the sighs of relief he gave at the end of every interview.

At heart the king was furious at these visits, which disturbed his pleasures and habits, and condemned him to spend long afternoons at Saint Mandé. For the queen's sake, however, he received, with a few commonplace remarks, the protestations of these poor people, who were

choked with their tears ; then avenged himself for his *ennui* by some sport or other, — a caricature pencilled, with an expression of wicked mischief at the corner of his lips, on the end of the table. He thus caricatured one day the syndic of the fishermen of Branizza, with a broad Italian face, with staring eyes, and stupefied by nervousness and his joy at the royal interview, while tears rolled down to his double chin. This *chef d'œuvre* circulated at table the next day amid laughter and exclamations of the guests.

The duke himself, in his scorn for the people, had just puckered his mouth as a token of great hilarity ; and the drawing reached Elysée, receiving on its way the noisy flattery of Boscovich. He looked at it a long while, handed it to his neighbor without saying a word ; and the king, calling to him from the end of the table in his impertinent nasal voice, said, —

“ You do not laugh, Méraut ; yet my syndic is pretty.”

“ No, your Majesty : I cannot laugh,” answered Méraut sadly. “ It is a perfect picture of my father.”

Some time after this, Elysée found himself the involuntary witness of a scene, which at last revealed Christian's character to him and his relations with the queen. It was on a Sunday, after mass. The little hotel, which had an unusually festive appearance, threw its gates on the Rue Herbillon wide open ; and all the servants in livery stood in a line in the antechamber opening on the porch, which was as full of foliage as a greenhouse. The reception which was to take place on this day was one of the greatest importance. They were expecting a royalist deputation of members of the Diet ; the *élite* and flower of the party coming to pay their homage of fidelity and devotion to the king, and to consult with him on the

measures to take for a near restoration. A real event that had been hoped for and announced, and whose solemnity was relieved by a magnificent winter's sun gilding and driving away the chill of the solitude of the vast reception-room with the high arm-chair of the king arranged as a throne, and bringing out of the shadow streams of sparkling light from the rubies, sapphires, and topazes of the crown.

While the house was in commotion with a continual coming and going, and with the rustle of silk dresses on every story ; while the little prince, allowing them to put on his long red stockings, velvet costume, and collar of Venetian *guipure*, repeated the speech they had made him study for a week ; and while Rosen, in grand style and covered with stars, was holding himself up straighter than ever to introduce the deputies, — Elysée, who had voluntarily taken refuge from all this bustle, was alone in the study-room, meditating on the consequences of the coming interview ; and in that *mirage* in which his Southern imagination loved to hover, he was already preparing the triumphant return of his sovereigns to Laybach amid salvos of artillery and ringing of bells, the streets joyously strewn with flowers, and the king and queen holding before them, as a promise to the people of a future which would again ennoble them, — place them in the ranks of younger ancestors, — his dearly loved pupil, the little Zara, who was intelligent and grave, as are all children who feel emotions too great for them.

The brilliancy of this beautiful Sunday, the lively bells ringing out in broad noonday sunshine, increased his hope of a *fête* where Frédérique's maternal pride would perhaps send a proud, satisfied smile to him over the child's head.

But in the court of honor, which was filled with the noisy bustle of arriving guests, the state carriages which had been sent to the hotel for the deputies were heard rolling heavily over the gravel. The coach-doors were noisily shut, and the footsteps died away on the carpets of the vestibule and *salon* into a murmur of voices paying their respects. Then there was a long silence, which surprised Méraut; for he expected to hear the king's speech delivered in his nasal voice. What was happening? what had checked the order of ceremonies?

At this moment, he, whom he believed in the next room and presiding at the official reception, appeared, walking with a stiff, embarrassed step, and grazing the blackened espaliers in the bright, chilly garden. He must have entered by the Avenue Daumesnil through the private gate, which is hidden by the ivy. Elysée at first thought there must have been a duel, or some accident: but, soon after, he heard the noise of a fall in the upper story, — a fall which seemed to carry with it the furniture and draperies of the room it was so prolonged and heavy, and accompanied by a crashing of articles falling to the floor, which confirmed him in his belief; and he ran up quickly to the king.

Christian's room, which was in the form of a semi-circle in the principal wing of the castle, was warm, and lined like a nest. It was hung with purple, and adorned with trophies of ancient arms; while the furniture consisted of lounges, low chairs, with bear and lion skins scattered about. And in the midst of this downy luxury was the original conceit of a little camp-bed, on which the king slept on account of a family tradition, and that posing for Spartan simplicity which millionnaires and sovereigns voluntarily affect.

The door was open.

Opposite Christian — who was leaning against the wall, with his hat pushed back from his pale, disturbed face ; with his long fur robe partly open and showing his coat, which was disarranged, his untied white cravat, his broad linen plastron in stiff, soiled creases, and his linen in that crumpled state which denotes the exhaustion of the previous night and the disorder of intoxication — the queen stood erect and severe, trembling with the violent effort she made to restrain herself, and saying, in a hollow, reproving voice, —

“You must ! you must ! Come !”

But he answered in a very low voice, looking ashamed, —

“I c-c-annot. You see that I c-c-annot — By and by — Promise you.”

Then he stammered his excuses with a stupid laugh and a childish voice. It was not because he had been drinking. Oh, no ! but the air, the cold, when he came out from supper.

“Yes, yes ! I know. No matter. You must go down. Let them see you ; only let them see you ! I will speak to them myself : I know what is necessary to say.”

And as he still remained motionless and mute from the stupor, which showed itself on his horribly distorted face, Frédérique grew exasperated in her anger.

“But remember that our destiny is at stake. Christian, it is your crown — the crown of your son — which you are playing for now. Try now : come ! I beg you, — I command.”

She was superb in her strong will, which was expressed in her greenish-blue eyes, and visibly magnetized the king.





"At last I am tired of acting for this wretched King." Page 107.



She held him by her look, tried to give him strength, to keep him erect, and helped him to remove his hat and great coat which was strongly scented with the fumes of drunkenness and the stifling smoke of cigars. He stiffened himself a moment on his weak limbs, and tottered forward a few steps, supporting his burning hands on the marble ones of the queen. But she felt that he was reeling, and recoiled from this feverish contact, and repulsed him with violence and disgust, leaving him to fall his whole length on a lounge ; then, without casting a look at the tumbled, motionless body, she left the room, and passed by Elysée without looking at him, holding herself erect, but casting down her eyes, and murmuring in a wandering, troubled way, like one walking in her sleep, "At last I am tired of acting for this wretched king."

## CHAPTER V.

## J. TOM LEVIS, AGENT FOR FOREIGNERS.

OF all the Parisian dens, all the Ali-Baba caverns with which the great city is mined and countermined, there is not one more peculiar, or of so interesting a character, as the Levis Agency. You are acquainted with it, like every one else, — at least from the outside.

It is in the Rue Royale, at the corner of the Faubourg Saint Honoré, directly on the route of the carriages on their way to the Bois or returning, so that no one can escape the alluring invitation of the sumptuous ground-floor with the eight steps leading to it; and its large windows with a single pane of glass, each bearing the vermilion, blue, and gilded arms of the principal powers of Europe, — eagles, unicorns, leopards, and all the heraldic menagerie. The Levis Agency attracts the attention of the least curious, at thirty metres' distance, across the entire width of the street, which is equal to a boulevard. Every one asks, "What is for sale there?" — "What is not for sale?" one should say. On each window-pane could be read in gold letters, "Here are sold wines, liquors, provisions, pale ale, kümmel, raki, caviare, prepared codfish;" and "Modern and ancient furniture, drapery, carpets from Smyrna and Ispahan, and plants." And farther on: "Pictures by the masters, marble and terra-cotta ornaments, costly arms, medals, and armor." Besides: "Change, discount, foreign money;"

and also, "Universal bookstore, journals of every country in every language." With, "Houses for sale or to let in the hunting country, sea-shore, or the suburbs ;" and "Information, secrecy, despatch."

This swarming of inscriptions and brilliant armor makes a strange medley in the front of the establishment, and does not allow one to get a good sight of the articles displayed. There is a confused mass of bottles of strange forms and colors, chairs in carved wood, pictures and furs, and some loose rolls of piasters and piles of paper money in wooden bowls. But the vast basement of the agency opening on the street on a level with the sidewalk, by a kind of port-holes with gratings, serves as a solid and sober support for the rather glaring display in the windows of the immense store, and gives the impression of the substantial warehouses of London, but retaining the *chic* and the claptrap of a window in the Boulevard de la Madeleine. It overflows with every kind of costly article, — rows of barrels, bales of goods, piles of chests and trunks, boxes of preserves, holes deep enough to give one the vertigo, as, when standing on the deck of a "packet" covered with freight to be shipped, one looks down into the gaping hold of the ship which is about to be loaded.

Thus situated and firmly established in the very whirl of Parisian travel, the net captures the floating tide of great and little fishes, — even the small fry of the Seine, the most cunning of all. If you pass it towards three o'clock in the afternoon, you will find it almost always filled.

At the large, polished glass door opening on the Rue Royale, and surmounted by a broad frontal of carved wood, — the entrance to a store where novelties or fashions are

supplied, — stands the footman of the house, decked with military lace, turning the door-knob as soon as he sees you, and, when necessary, holding an umbrella over patrons alighting from their carriages. Before you is a long room, divided by partitions and railings, with gates, into a large number of compartments or boxes, as far as the end of the store on the right and left.

The dazzling daylight brightens the waxed floors, the wood-work, and the correct coats and curled hair of the employés, who are all elegant and fine looking, but have a foreign accent and manner.

Here were seen olive faces, pointed heads, and narrow Asiatic shoulders ; and, underneath the china-blue eyes, American beards encircling the throat like a collar, with German red carnation complexions. In whatever idiom the purchaser makes known his wants, he is always sure to be understood ; for they speak every language in the agency except the Russian, which is quite unnecessary, since the Russians speak all except their own. The crowd comes and goes around the gates, and sits in light chairs while waiting. In it are ladies and gentlemen in travelling-dress, with Astrachan caps, Scotch caps, long veils floating over water-proofs, and dusters ; with Scotch plaids clothing indiscriminately the two sexes, bundles in straps, and leather bags slung over the shoulder. It is a true public waiting-room, where people gesticulate, and talk loud in the free unembarrassed manner one sees in people when away from home, and where they make the same discordant hubbub that one hears in bird-stores on the Quai de Gèvres. At the same time corks pop out of bottles of pale ale or *romanée*, and piles of gold rattle down on the wooden counters. There is a constant whistling and striking of speaking-tubes mingled with

the sound of a chord of arpeggios from some one trying the piano, or the exclamations of a tribe of Samoides around an enormous photograph in charcoal, and the unrolling of a pasteboard plan of a house. And then, from one box to another, clerks call out to each other, imparting some piece of information, — a number, or a name of a person or street ; and, from being eager and smiling, become all at once majestic, frozen, and indifferent, with an expression of countenance as if their thoughts were completely detached from the things of this world, whenever an unfortunate man, wandering about as if lost, and sent from gate to gate, at last leans over and speaks to them in a low voice of a certain mysterious thing, which seems to fill them with astonishment. Sometimes, feeling tired of being gazed at like a waterspout or meteor, the man becomes impatient, and asks to see Tom Levis himself, who would certainly know all about it. Then he is answered with a disdainful smile that J. Tom Levis is busy. J. Tom Levis is engaged with some one ; and not about little unimportant matters like yours, — not with little nobodies like you, my worthy man ! Stop ! look yonder to the further end of the store. A door has just opened, and Tom Levis appears a second, more majestic himself than are all in his employ ; majestic in his rounded paunch ; majestic in his bald pate, which is as shiny as the floor of the agency ; majestic in his way of tossing back his little head, and looking fifteen steps away from you ; and majestic in the despotic gesture of his short arm, and in the solemn way in which he asks in very loud tones, with his insular accent, if the “*envoâ*” of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has been attended to : while at the same time, with the hand that is free, he keeps his office-

door behind him tightly closed, to give people to understand that the august personage who shuts himself up there is not to be disturbed under any pretext.

It need not be told that the Prince of Wales never came to the agency, and they have not the smallest order of his to fill ; but you can imagine the effect of this name on the crowd in the store, and on the solitary patron to whom Tom has just said in his office, " Pardon ! A moment — A little matter to ask about."

Some banking business ! banking business ! There is no more a Prince of Wales behind the office-door than there is raki or kümmel in the odd bottles in the window, or English or Viennese beer in the barrels arranged in a row in the basements ; nor are goods transported in the gilded and varnished wagons, emblazoned with the initials " J . T . L.," which go galloping along, the faster because they are empty, through the beautiful quarters of Paris,—a perambulating, noisy advertisement, tearing along with the fierce speed which distinguishes men and beasts in the Tom Levis Agency.

If a poor devil, intoxicated by this glitter, should plunge his fist through the cash-window, and eagerly thrust his bleeding hand in the wooden bowls, he would draw it out full of brass counters ; if he takes that enormous pile of bank-notes, he will carry off a five-pound note on a ream of brown paper.

Nothing in the show-windows ; nothing in the basement, — nothing ! nothing ! not as much as the snap of your finger. But the port these English taste ! the change which this *boyar* carries off for his rubles ! the little bronze packed up for that Greek of the Isles ! Oh, heavens ! there is nothing more simple ! The English beer comes from the public-house next door ; the gold



from a broker on the boulevard ; the trinket from the store of "Chose" in the Rue du Quatre Septembre. All that is required is an errand quickly done by two or three clerks who are waiting in the basement for orders through the speaking-tubes.

Going out through the yard of the neighboring house, they return in a few minutes, emerge from the winding stairs, with its open-work balustrade and glass ball at the end, which connects the two stories. Here is the article asked for, guaranteed, and labelled "J. T. L." And do not give yourself any concern, my prince : if this does not please you, it can be changed. The cellars of the agency are well stocked. Things are a little dearer here than elsewhere, — only double and triple the price. But is not that better than to run about in shops where one cannot understand a word of what you say, in spite of the promise on the signboard, "English spoken," or "*Man spricht deutsch*"? — these stores on the boulevard, where the stranger, overcome and circumvented, never finds any thing but the last of boxes or remnants, the old stock, the refuse of Paris, the shop-worn goods, the articles which are no longer in the fashion, and last year's contents of the show-window faded more by age than by dust or sunlight.

Oh ! the Parisian shopkeeper, obsequious, yet disagreeably persistent ; disdainful and indifferent, yet following one closely about ! his days have ended : the foreigner wishes no more of him. He is weary at last of being so cruelly imposed upon, not only by the shopkeeper, but by the people in the hotel where he sleeps, the restaurant where he eats, the hack which he hails in the street, and the ticket-seller who sends him to yawn in empty theatres. At least, in the Levis establishment —

in that ingenious agency of foreigners, where one finds all that one desires — you are sure not to be deceived ; for J. Tom Levis is an Englishman, and the commercial integrity of the English is known in the old and new world.

J. Tom Levis is an Englishman — and as much of one as it is possible to be — from the square toes of his Quaker shoes to his long overcoat hanging down over his green checked pantaloons, to his pyramidal-shaped hat, with its very small brim, from which his round, rosy face, with its innocent, boyish look, stands out prominently. One read loyalty to Albion in the beefsteak complexion, the mouth which reached from ear to ear, and the blond silkiness of the whiskers, which were uneven through their owner's mania for devouring one of them — always the same one — in his moments of perplexity ; and one could divine it by his short hand, with fingers covered with red hair and loaded with rings. And there was a loyal look in his eyes too, underneath a large pair of spectacles delicately mounted in gold ; so loyal, that, when Tom Levis was obliged to lie, — the best of us are forced to do this sometimes, — the pupils, by a singular nervous twitching, revolved like small wheels carried away in the perspective of a gyroscope.

But that which thoroughly completes Tom Levis's English appearance is his cab, the first vehicle of the kind ever seen in Paris, and a natural shell for such an original being. If he has business which is somewhat complicated, or one of those moments that come to a businessman sometimes when he finds himself driven into a tight corner, he says to himself, " I will take a cab ; " and in it he is sure to have an idea. He contrives, weighs, and decides ; while the Parisians see the profile of a

thoughtful man energetically gnawing his right whisker roll by in the two-wheeled transparent box, which is almost on a level with the ground. It is in this cab that he has conceived his finest strokes, — those that belonged to the last days of the Empire. Ah ! those were good times. Paris overflowed with strangers, — not transient ones but an influx of wealthy foreigners, — who ordered nothing but weddings and entertainments. We had the Turk Hussein Bey and the Egyptian Mehemet Pacha, two celebrated Islamites, near the lake ; and the Princess Verkatscheff, who threw all the money of the Oural Mountains out of the fourteen windows of her apartments on the first story on the Boulevard Malesherbes ; and the American Bergson, whose enormous income in petroleum-wells was consumed by Paris (he recovered his money afterwards) ; and nabobs — flotillas of nabobs — of every color, yellow, brown, and red, a variegated collection, were seen in every promenade and theatre, eager to spend money and enjoy themselves, as if they foresaw that they must exhaust the pleasures of the grand saloon before the formidable explosion which would crush in the roof, and break the mirrors and windows.

You may be sure that J. Tom Levis was the indispensable intermediary in all these pleasures ; that a louis was not given in change without his having previously pared it ; and that in addition to his foreign patrons were Parisian high livers of the time, amateurs in search of rare game, poachers on private hunting-grounds, who applied to friend Tom as the shrewdest and most skilful agent, and also because their secrets seemed to them safer behind his barbarous French and difficult enunciation.

The seal J. T. L. stamped all the scandalous stories at the close of the Empire. It was in the name of Tom

Levis that the box in the pit, No. 9, in the Opera Comique, was retained, and in which the Baroness Mills spent one hour every evening listening to her dear little tenor, whose handkerchief, moistened with perspiration and lily-white, she carried off in the lace in her corsage after the *cavatina*.

In the name of Tom Levis the small hotel in the Avenue de Clichy was let for the use of a lady jointly, and without their suspicion, to the brothers Sismondo, two bankers in partnership, who never left their counting-room at the same time. Ah ! what beautiful romances one could have read in the books of the agency at that time : —

*“ House with two entrances, on the road to Saint Cloud. Let furnished. Security to the tenant ”* — so much.

And underneath : —

*“ Manager’s commission ”* — so much.

*“ Country-house at Little Vattin, near Plombières : garden, coach-house, two entrances. Security to the tenant ”* — so much.

And always “a manager’s commission.” This manager’s commission swells the accounts of the agency.

Though Tom grew rich in those days, he also spent money liberally, — not in gaming, or on horses or women, but in gratifying wild, childish caprices, and the most foolish and absurd fancies imaginable, which he carried into execution as soon as conceived. Once it was his fancy to have an alley of acacias at the end of his estate at Courbevoie ; and, as it takes trees too long to grow, for a week one saw large carts winding slowly along the banks of the Seine. — which were bare and dingy in this vicinity, from the smoke of factories, — and each bore an

acacia, from whose plummy, green branches, swayed by the motion of the wheels, trembling shadows floated over the water.

This suburban estate — in which Tom Levis lived all the year, according to the custom of great London merchants — was at first a country-box, consisting of one story and attics ; but afterwards it became a source of frightful expense. His business prospering and extending, he increased his property in proportion ; and from one building after another, and acquisition after acquisition, he finally possessed a park made up of annexes and tracts of cultivated ground joined to woodland. It was a strange estate, in which his tastes, ambitions, and English eccentricity were revealed, and which was deformed and made more unshapely still by *bourgeois* ideas and pretentious attempts at art.

Around the main house to the upper stories — which had been lately added, as was plainly seen — extended an Italian terrace with a marble balustrade, flanked by two Gothic towers, leading by a covered bridge to another row of buildings, representing a *chalet* with open-work balconies, and a curtain of climbing ivy. This was of brick, painted in stucco, like a toy-house in the Black Forest, with a wealth of towers, embattlements, weather-vanes, and *moucharabies*. In the park there was a display of bristling kiosks and belvederes, and dazzling hot-houses and ponds, and the black bastion of an immense reservoir for supplying water to the heights, which was surmounted by a real windmill, whose sails, sensible to the slightest breeze, flapped and turned on their axis with a perpetual grating.

Indeed, in the narrow space through which the trains pass in this suburb of Paris, many burlesque villas, framed

in the glass window of the car, flit by like visions and nightmares, — the effort of a shopkeeper's brain escaped from business, and gambolling. But none are to be compared to Tom Levis's "Folly," unless it be that villa of his neighbor Spricht, — the great Spricht, the illustrious dressmaker for ladies.

This pompous personage only remains in Paris during the three business-hours in the afternoon, when he gives his dainty consultations in his grand office on the boulevards; then immediately returns to his house at Courbevoie. The secret of this forced retirement is, that "*le cher* Spricht," the "*dear*," as the ladies call him, — although he has in his drawers, among wonderful samples of Lyonnese fabrics, specimens of handwriting and scrawls from the best gloved hands in Paris, — has been obliged to content himself with no more than this intimate correspondence, as he is received in none of the houses where he supplies costumes; and his fine connections have spoiled him for all intercourse with the commercial world of which he is a part. Therefore he lives very retired in his home, which is invaded, like that of all *parvenus*, by a host of poor relations, and uses his wealth to have them royally entertained. His only diversion, and what would be a flavor necessary to the life of a retired spendthrift, is the neighborhood and rivalry of Tom Levis, and the hatred and scorn which they mutually vowed for each other without hardly knowing why, which made all understanding between them impossible.

When Spricht erects a tower, — Spricht is a German, and loves the romantic, castles, valleys, and ruins, and has a passion for the middle ages, — Tom Levis immediately has a veranda built. When Tom builds a wall, Spricht tears down all his hedges.

There is a story in regard to a pavilion built by Tom which spoiled Spricht's view towards Saint Cloud. The dressmaker then raised the balcony of his pigeon-house. Tom responded by a new story ; but Spricht did not consider himself beaten, and the two edifices, with a great re-enforcement of stones and workmen, continued their ascension till one fine night, when the wind threw them both down without any difficulty, on account of their frail construction. Spricht, on his return from a journey to Italy, brings back a gondola, — a real gondola, — and places it in the little harbor at the foot of his estate. A week afterwards, pft ! pft ! a pretty steam-yacht with sails comes to Tom Levis's wharf, and stirs the water in which the towers, roofs, and battlements of his villa are reflected.

To support such style as this it would have been necessary that the empire should last forever ; and its last hour had come. The war, the siege, and the departure of foreigners, were a veritable disaster to the two businessmen, especially for Tom Levis, whose estate was devastated by the invasion, while that of Spricht was spared. But, when peace was made, war began again between the two rivals ; and this time their fortunes were unequal, the great *modiste* having seen all his patrons return, and poor Tom having waited in vain for his. The notice, "Information, secrecy, despatch," brought no more, or hardly any more ; and the mysterious manager no longer came clandestinely to get pay at the offices of the agency. Any other in Tom Levis's place would have checked himself ; but this devil of a fellow had habits of spending money which he could not conquer, and a certain something about his hands which prevented them from closing.

And then the Sprichts were there, dismal enough since late events, declaring that the end of the world was near ;

and, having built at the end of their park a small representation of the ruins of the Hotel de Ville with its crumbled walls blackened by flames, on Sunday evening they illuminated it with Bengal lights, and all the Sprichts gathered around it to lament. It was very gloomy.

Tom Levis, on the contrary, having become a republican through hatred of his rival, *fêted* regenerated France, organized pleasure-excursions and regattas and crowned *rosières*; and on one of these coronations, in an outburst of luxurious joy, he carried off one summer evening at the concert-hour the band of the Champs Elysées, and brought it to Courbevoie, playing on the water, in a yacht with all sails flying.

Debts accumulated by such doings; but the Englishman troubled himself little about them. No one understood better than he how to disconcert creditors by coolness and lordly independence. No one — not even the clerks in his agency, who held their heads quite as high — had his way of examining bills curiously, as if they were palimpsest, and tossing them into the drawer with a lofty air; no one had his tricks to avoid payment and to gain time. Time! it was that which Tom Levis counted on in which to find some fruitful operation again. — what he called “a big strike” in the figurative slang in the Bohemia of money. But it was in vain that he took a cab, or ran nervously about Paris with his watchful eye and long teeth, looking like some animal scenting and waiting for his prey. The years passed, and the “big strike” was not made.

One afternoon, when the agency was crowded with people, a tall young man with a haughty, languid appearance, quizzing eyes, and a delicate mustache on the pale, bloated, but handsome face, approached the principal gate, and asked to see Tom Levis.



The clerk, mistaking the cavalier intention which lay beneath the request, believed him to be a creditor, and put on his most disdainful look ; when the young man, with a sharp voice, whose nasal tone increased its impertinence, declared to the "swell fellow" that he might notify his patron at once that the King of Illyria wished to speak to him. "Ah, your Majesty ! your Majesty !" There was an eager stir among the cosmopolitan crowd, who had some curiosity regarding the hero of Ragusa. From all the open boxes came a swarm of clerks hurrying forward to do escort to his Majesty, and to introduce him to Tom Levis, who had not yet arrived, but was likely to come in at any moment.

It was the first time Christian appeared at the agency, the old Duke de Rosen having till now settled all the bills of the little court. But to-day the business was of such a private and delicate nature, that the king did not dare to confide it even to the heavy but discreet aide-de-camp, — a little house to be hired for a circus-rider, who had just taken Amy Férat's place ; a furnished pavilion ready for occupancy in twenty-four hours, with service, a stable, and certain facilities of access. It was one of those master-strokes which the Levis Agency alone knew how to make.

The *salon* where he waited contained just two large arm-chairs in moleskin ; and one of those fireplaces lighted by gas, narrow and silent, whose reflection seemed to come from a fire in the next room ; and a little stand with a blue cloth, with a Bottin almanac lying upon it. Half of the room was taken up by the tall railing, which was draped with blue curtains ; and by a desk carefully placed, and showing above itself the great book with steel corners standing open under a paper weight, and surrounded by sand-powder, erasers, rulers, and pen-wipers ;

and by a long case full of books of the same size, — the books of the agency, with their green backs, in a row, looking like Prussians on parade. The order in this small, hospitable place, the freshness of the things that filled it, did honor to the old cashier, who was absent for a short time, and whose life, full of details, was passed there.

While the king continued to wait, lounging in his arm-chair, his head raised from his furs, all at once, without a movement of the glass door leading into the store, he noticed a light, quick scratching of the pen behind the railing, which was closed with a large Algerian curtain, with a harlequin's hole like that of the drop-curtain in a theatre. Some one was seated at the desk: not the old clerk with the face of a white wolf, for whom the niche seemed made, but the most charming little body that ever turned the pages of a ledger. At Christian's movement of surprise, she turned around, measured him with her sweet, deliberate look, — a look so prolonged that a little spark in the corner of each eye seemed to radiate to the temples. The whole room was illuminated by this look, and was musically charmed by a feeling and almost trembling voice, which murmured, "My husband keeps you waiting a long time, your Majesty."

Tom Levis her husband! the husband of that agreeable creature with the delicate, pale profile, and the full, graceful outlines of a statuette of Tanagra! How came she there alone in that cage turning over the leaves of those great books, whose whiteness was reflected on her colorless complexion, and whose pages her little fingers could with difficulty turn over, and doing all this on one of those beautiful, sunny February days of which along the boulevard fair promenaders were profiting to dis-

play their toilets, sprightly graces, and smiles? As he approached her, he made some kind of a remark, in which his various impressions were confusedly expressed; but his heart beat so that he could not talk, and was stirred by a sudden, ungovernable desire, such as this spoiled, *blasé* child never remembered to have had. It was because the type of this woman, who was twenty-five or thirty years, was absolutely new to him, and as different from little Colette de Rosen, with her rebellious curls, as from the girlish poise of La Férat with her impudent eyes with painted circles beneath, and from the embarrassing majesty of the queen, whose manner was noble and sad. Neither coquetry nor boldness nor proud reserve did she show,—nothing like what he met in refined society, or in his relations with the *demi-monde*. This pretty person—with her calm, domestic ways, with her beautiful dark hair, as smooth as that of women who dress it in the morning for the day—was simply attired in a woollen dress shading on violet. Two very large brilliants on the rosy tips of her ears alone prevented one from taking her to be the most modest of clerks. She appeared to him, in the imprisonment of her desk and work, like a Carmelite behind the grating of a cloister, or some Oriental slave looking imploringly through the gilded railing of her terrace. She had the submissive timidity of the slave, as well as the sloping profile, and the amber tints of skin where the hair began; while the straight line of the eyebrows, and parted lips, gave an Asiatic look to this Parisian woman. Christian, as he stood opposite her, thought of the bare forehead and monkeyfied appearance of the husband. How happened she to be in the power of such a *fantoché*? Was it not a theft,—a flagrant injustice?

But the sweet voice continued to slowly proffer excuses: "It is very provoking Tom does not come. If your Majesty would only tell me what brings you here, I might, perhaps" —

Christian blushed, feeling a little embarrassed. He never would have dared to trust this frank kindness, and tell her of the rather equivocal establishment he meditated. She then insisted, faintly smiling: "Oh! your Majesty need have no fear. It is I who keep the agency's books."

And it was plain to be seen that she had authority; for every other moment a clerk would come to the little bull's-eye window which gave communication between the private room of the cashier and the store, and whisper the oddest information: "Madame Karitidés Pleyel is wanted;" "The person from the Bristol Hotel was there." She seemed to understand every thing, answering with a word or a figure. And the king, feeling very much disturbed, wondered if this angel in the shop — this aerial being — really knew the Englishman's plots and filibustering.

"No, Madame: the business that brings me is not urgent, or at least is no longer so. My ideas have changed very much in the past hour."

He leans over the railing as he whispers this, very much moved; then stops, and reproaches himself for his audacity in the presence of this woman with her calm activity, and with her long lashes sweeping the pages, while her pen glides on in regular lines. Oh, how he would like to take her from her prison, and carry her away in his arms, — far away, — murmuring tender and caressing words, such as one uses to comfort little children! The temptation was so great that he was obliged

to avoid it, and take a sudden leave, without having seen Tom Levis.

Night came on foggy and chilly; but the king, who was usually so sensitive to cold, did not feel it, and sent his carriage away, and returned on foot to the Royal Club by the broad streets which go from the Madeleine to the Place Vendôme; and was so transported with enthusiasm, that he talked aloud to himself, while the locks of his fine hair fell down over his eyes, before which flames were dancing. In the street sometimes one brushes by people who are filled with this exuberant happiness, and, walking along with a light step and head erect, seem to leave a phosphorescence on your clothing as they pass.

Christian reached the club, still in the same happy mood in spite of the gloom of the row of *salons* where gathered the shadows of the vague, idle hour of twilight, which is particularly melancholy in these half-public places, where one misses the social, familiar home-atmosphere.

Lamps were brought. In the distance were heard the sounds of a quiet game of billiards, with the rattling of ivory resounding against the hollow walls, a rustling of newspapers laid aside after being read, and the weary breathing of some one asleep on a lounge in the grand *salon* whom the king disturbed as he entered, and caused to turn round and open his toothless mouth in a yawn, with an endless stretching of his long, slender arms, while at the same time he asked in a dull voice, —

“What’s up to-night?”

Christian gave a cry of joy.

“Ah! my prince, I was looking for you.”

His delight was owing to the fact that the Prince

d'Axel, more familiarly known as Queue de Poule, having paraded Parisian sidewalks as an amateur for ten years, knew them up and down and across, from the steps of Tortoni to the gutter, and no doubt could give him the information he wished. Therefore, knowing the only way to unburden that heavy, torpid mind which the wines of France — which the prince abused, however — succeeded in stirring no better than the fermentation of the vintage can swell and raise a heavy thunderbolt into a balloon, Christian quickly asked him for cards; for, like Molière's heroines who have no wit without a fan in their hands, Axel only showed life while shuffling the pasteboard. The fallen and the presumptive majesties being in disgrace, the two celebrities of the club began a game of Chinese *béziq* before dinner, — the most swell game in the world, because it does not tire the head, and permits the most awkward player to lose a fortune without the least effort.

"So Tom Levis is married?" asked Christian II. carelessly, as he cut the cards. Axel looked at him with his dull eyes, with their reddened lids.

"Did you not know it?"

"No. Who is the woman?"

"Sephora Leemans, a celebrity."

The king trembled at the name Sephora.

"Is she a Jewess?"

"Probably."

There was a moment's pause. Truly the impression — with the oval, colorless face of a recluse, sparkling eyes, and glossy, bewitching tresses — that Sephora left must have been very strong to triumph over the prejudice which had existed in the memory of the Slavonian and Catholic, whose childhood was haunted by the pillage and

fiendish sorcery of the Bohemian Jews of his country. He continued his questions. Unfortunately the prince was losing, and, being thoroughly absorbed in his game, grumbled from behind his long yellow beard, —

“Ah ! but I am getting bothered : I am bothered.”

It was impossible to get another word out of him.

“Good ! here is Wattelet. Come here, Wattelet,” said the king to a tall youth who had just entered as frisky and noisy as a young puppy.

This Wattelet, the painter of the Royal Club and high life, who was rather handsome at a distance, but whose features looked worn and showed the marks of a fast life, represented the modern artist, who bears very little resemblance to the brilliant tradition of 1830. Correctly dressed from head to foot, a news-bringer in *salons* and green-rooms, he preserved nothing of the *rapin*<sup>1</sup> of the studio, but the supple, rather ungainly, gait and dress of a man of the world ; and in his mind, as in his language, there was the same elegant indistinctness, with a careless, mocking pucker of the lips. Having come to the club one day to decorate the dining-room, he made himself so agreeable and so indispensable to all these gentlemen, that he remained with the house the organizer for life of games and of the rather monotonous *fêtes* of the place, bringing to these pleasures the surprises of a picturesque imagination, and an education obtained from every kind of society.

“My dear Wattelet. My little Wattelet.” No one could do without him. He was intimate with all the members of the club, with their wives and mistresses. He sketched on the right side of a card the costume of the Duchess of V—— for the next ball of the embassy,

<sup>1</sup> A pupil who is the drudge of the studio.

and, on the other side, the airy skirts and the flesh-colored tights of Mademoiselle Alzère, the duke's little musk-rat.

Thursdays his studio was open to all his noble patrons, who enjoyed the freedom with the unrestrained fanciful talk of the house, the dazzle of soft colors from the tapestries, collections, lacquered furniture, and the artist's canvases, — a painting which resembled himself, elegant but a trifle common ; some portraits of women, for the most part executed with an understanding of the Parisian frauds, — disguised complexions, disordered, fluffy locks, and all the furbelows in the form of puffs and sweeping trains and airy bits of floating ribbon, which made Spricht say, with the disdainful condescension of the *parvenu* business-man towards a rising artist, —

“No one but this little fellow knows how to paint the women I dress.”

At the first word the king uttered, Wattelet began to laugh.

“But, your Majesty, it is little Sephora.”

“Do you know her?”

“Perfectly.”

“Tell me about her.”

And, while the game between the two great lords continued, the painter, placed on terms of intimacy of which he was very proud, sitting astride a chair, posed, coughed, and, assuming the voice of the showman who describes the painted canvas of a side-show, began : —

“Sephora Leemans was born in Paris in eighteen hundred forty-five, six, or seven, among the brokers in the Rue Eginhard in the Marais, — a dirty little mouldy lane, between Charlemagne Street and Saint Paul's Church, in the very heart of the Jewish colony. Some day, when you are coming from Saint Mandé, your Majesty must



make your coachman turn down these streets, and you will see a part of Paris that will astonish you, — houses and faces, an Alsatian and Hebrew medley, shops, old-clothes dens, and a pile of rags as high as that before each door; old women poking their crooked noses among them, or stripping the frames of old umbrellas; and dogs, vermin, and odors, — a true Ghetto of the middle ages, swarming in modern houses, with iron balconies and high dormer windows. Her father is not a Jew, however, but a Belgian of Ghent and a Catholic: and the little one need not call herself Sephora; for she is a half-breed Jew, with the complexion and eyes of her race, but without the hooked nose. On the contrary, she has the prettiest little straight nose. I do not know where she got it indeed; for Leemans has a regular Jewish face. My first medal in the *salon* had just such a one. Heavens! yes, the good man will show you in a corner of the mean, muddy Rue Eginhard, — in what he calls his broker's office, — his full-length portrait, signed 'Wattelet,' and not one of my worst either. I found the way to gain an entrance into the hovel, and to pay my court to Sephora, for whom I had one of those *beguins*."<sup>1</sup>

"A *beguin*?" said the king, to whom the Parisian dictionary always caused some surprise. "Ah! yes, I understand. Continue."

"I was not the only flame, you may be sure. All day long there was a procession in the Rue de la Paix; for I must tell you, your Majesty, that Leemans in those times had two establishments. The old man was very shrewd, and understood the change in the fashions in

<sup>1</sup> TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. — *Beguin* means "weak infatuation," from the name given to women who adopted the heresy of the Beguins, a religious order in the thirteenth century.

regard to trinkets during the last twenty years. The romantic second-hand *bric-à-brac* dealer of the dingy quarters after the style of Hoffman, and even of Balzac, has given place to the merchant of curiosities in the wealthy part of Paris, where there are well-lighted show-windows. Leemans kept his musty place in the Rue Eginhard, and amateurs continued to haunt it; but for the public, the passers-by, for the Parisian follower and swallower, he opened a superb store of old curiosities in the middle of the Rue de la Paix, which, with tawny gold and deep silver of old jewels, dingy laces the color of a mummy, outvied modern jewellers' or watchmakers' establishments sparkling with riches on the same street.

"Sephora was then fifteen; and all these ancient things made a becoming setting to her quiet, youthful beauty. She was very intelligent, and very quick in showing off an article, with as correct an eye as her father for the true value of a trinket. Ah! amateurs came to the shop for the pleasure of feeling the touch of her fingers, and the silky waves of her hair, as they leaned over the same show-case. The mother, who was not in the way, — an old lady with so dark a circle under her eyes that she looked as if she had on spectacles, — always held her nose over some piece of lace or old tapestry-work, and paid no attention to her daughter. And in this she was quite right. Sephora was a serious person, whom nothing could turn from her path."

"Indeed!" said the king, who appeared to be delighted.

"Your Majesty can judge by this. Mother Leemans slept in the store; and the daughter returned to the *bric-à-brac* shop by ten o'clock, that the old man might not be alone. Well, this admirable creature, whose

beauty was celebrated and sung in all the papers, and who by a simple nod of the head might have seen Cinderella's chariot rise up before her, waited every evening for the omnibus from the Madeleine, and returned directly to the paternal owl's nest. In the morning, as the omnibus did not pass at the hour she left, she went on foot through every kind of weather, with a water-proof over her black dress; and I would swear that among all the crowd of shop-girls who go down the Rue de Rivoli Saint Antoine with hood, hat, or bareheaded, with pale or smiling faces and small dewy mouths, and coughing in the foggy air, with some gallant always at their heels, none could compare with her."

"What time did she use to go that way?" mumbled the royal prince, very much enamoured.

But Christian grew impatient.

"Let him finish. And then" —

"Then, your Majesty, I succeeded in gaining admittance into my angel's house, and I mildly pushed my point. On Sundays they organized little family games of loto with a few old clothes-dealers in Charlemagne Street. A fine society it was. I invariably brought away fleas. But I always seated myself near Sephora, and touched her knee under the table, while she looked at me with a certain angelic, limpid look in her eyes, which made me believe she possessed the innocence and frankness of true virtue.

"One day, when I arrived at the Rue Eginhard, I found the shop topsy-turvy; the mother in tears; while the father, in a passion, was cleaning an old lock-musket, with which he intended to shoot the infamous cloper: for the little one had run off with Baron Sala, one of Leeman's richest patrons; but I learned later that the

daughter had been sold like some ancient jewel. For two or three years Sephora concealed her happiness and amours with this septuagenarian in Switzerland, in Scotland, on the borders of the blue lakes. Then I heard one fine morning that she had returned, and was keeping a family hotel at the end of the Avenue d'Antin. I hastened there to see her, and found my old flame, still adorable and calm in her manners, occupying the head of a very queer *table d'hôte*, where were gathered Brazilians, Englishmen, and *cocottes*. Half of the guests were still eating dessert, while the other half had turned away the table-cloth to attack a game of cards. It was here that Sephora became acquainted with Tom Levis, who was not handsome or young, and without a cent into the bargain. How did he get round her? Well, that is a mystery. One thing I do know, however, and that is, she sold her property for him, married him, and helped him to establish the agency, which at first was prosperous and elegantly fitted up, but is now losing; so that Sephora, who never used to be seen, and lived like a recluse in the queer castle bought by Tom Levis, made her appearance before the world again a few months ago, playing the *rôle* of the most delightful little book-keeper. And, bless me! how the patronage increased! The flower of the clubs began to make rendezvous in the Rue Royale. They flirted through the railing around the desk as they used to do in the shop of antiquities, or the room bearing on the door the number and name of the "family." As for me, I am no longer one of her admirers: she frightened me at last. She was just the same that she had been for ten years, not a crease or wrinkle on her face, which was fresh and full under her eyes with the long, drooping lashes, which turned up at the end in a way that would

melt your heart. And all this for this grotesque husband whom she adores. It is enough to torment and discourage the most enamoured."

The king rattled the cards scornfully.

"Come, now: is it possible? An ugly monkey, a *poussah* like Tom Levis, bald, and fifteen years older than she,—a pickpocket, who speaks French with such an abominable English accent!"

"But some people like that, your Majesty."

And the prince royal, with his drawling, common tone of voice, said,—

"I won't have any thing to do with the woman. I have whistled to the moon long enough. The way is blocked."

"*Pardieu*, d'Axel! We know your way of whistling to the moon," said Christian, when he comprehended this expression, which had passed from the slang of the mechanic into that of the high-toned swell. "You have no patience. The way must be open to you at the Grand Seize. But I assert that a man who would take the pains to be in love with Sephora, who would not grow weary of silence and scorn, would find it but the affair of a month,—no longer."

"I bet you he wouldn't," said d'Axel.

"How much?"

"Two thousand louis."

"I take it up. Wattelet, call for the book."

This book, on which were inscribed the bets of the Royal Club, was as curious and instructive in its way as those in the Levis den. The greatest names of the French aristocracy sanctioned the oddest and silliest bets,—that of the Duke of Courson-Launay, for example, who, having bet and lost all the hair on his body, was

obliged to peel himself like a Moor, and for a fortnight could neither walk nor sit down. There were other wagers still more extravagant; and signatures of heroes inscribed on a hundred glorious parchments were degraded in this album of folly.

Several members of the club grouped with respectful curiosity around the bettors; and this ridiculous and cynical bet, excusable perhaps in the fun or intoxication of overflowing youth, took, in the presence of the gravity of all these bald heads, the social dignity which they represented, and the heraldic importance of the signatures attached, the appearance of an international treaty regulating the destinies of Europe.

It read thus:—

*“On the 3d of February, 1875, his Majesty Christian II. has bet two thousand louis that before the end of the present month Sephora L. will be his.”*

*“His Royal Highness the Prince d’Axel takes the bet.”*

“This perhaps was an occasion for signing ‘Rigolo’ and ‘Queue de Poule,’” said Wattelet to himself, carrying back the book; and across his worldly, clownish face flitted the shadow of a wicked smile.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE BOHEMIA OF EXILE.

"WELL, well ! we know that ! ' *Adh !* Yes : Goddam — Schoking.' It is when you wish neither to pay nor answer that you make use of that coin. But with Bibi that no longer makes any impression. Let us settle our accounts, old miser."

"Truly, Master Lebeau, *vô pález à moá avec one véhémence.*"<sup>1</sup>

And to utter this word "*véhémence*," which he seemed very proud of having added to his vocabulary, — for he repeated it two or three times in succession, — Tom Levis threw himself back, and his drooping chin disappeared in the large, white, clergyman's cravat which choked him.

At the same time the pupils in his widely open eyes began to turn round and round, making their expression still more unfathomable, while his adversary's look, which was cringing and fawning under his lowered eyelids, answered the rascally fluency of the Englishman with the cunning which was still visible in his narrow, smooth, weasel face.

With his light, frizzly hair, and clothing austere black and high in the neck, and the correctness of his circumspect bearing, Master Lebeau had something of the look of an agent of the ancient *châtelet*; but, as there is nothing like debates and selfish anger to show natures as they

<sup>1</sup> You speak to me with vehemence.

are, in the present moment this well-brought-up man, who was as polished as his finger-nails, — the unctuous Lebeau, the pet of royal antechambers, the former footman in the Tuileries, — showed what a hateful rogue he was, always eager for gain.

To escape a spring shower which was flooding the court-yard, the two confederates had taken refuge in the spacious coach-house, whose walls, freshly whitewashed and covered half-way up with thick matting which protected from dampness the numerous and magnificent carriages which stood in a row, wheel against wheel, from the gala coaches, all glass and gilt, to the comfortable four-in-hand with a hamper, to the light shopping phaeton, and to the sleigh in which the queen drove over the lakes when they were frozen, — all preserving, in repose and in the dim light of the coach-house, the dashing and imposing appearance of creatures of luxury, glittering and costly as the fantastic horses of Assyrian legends. The adjoining stables from which were heard the snorting and loud kicking of horses against the wood-work, the partly opened saddle-room with its waxed floor and wainscoting like a billiard-hall, all the whips in the rack, the harnesses and saddles on wooden horses, glittering with steel ornaments, and hung like trophies around the walls and twined about with bridles, completed this impression of comfort and royal style.

Tom and Lebeau were conversing in a corner ; and their voices grew loud, and mingled with the noise of the rain on the asphalt walks. The *valet-de-chambre* in particular, who felt himself at home, called out in a very loud voice, “ Did any one understand this filibustering of Levis? Who could have imagined such a trick? When their Majesties left the Hôtel des Pyramides for Saint Mandé, who at-



tended to the business? Was it Lebeau, or not? And did he not do it in spite of every one, — in spite of open hostility? And what was agreed upon on returning? Were we not to divide all the commissions, all the wine-pots of the tradespeople? Come, now : was it not so?"

"*Aôh ! yes : ce était bien cela.*"

"Then why do you cheat?"

"No, no, I never cheat," said Tom Levis, with his hand on his chin.

"Come, now, old humbug : all the tradespeople give you forty out of a hundred. I have proof of it ; and you told me that you had ten. And, out of the million it cost to move into Saint Mandé, I have my five out of the hundred, — that is fifty thousand francs ; and you have your thirty-five of the hundred, — that is seven times fifty thousand francs, or three hundred and fifty thousand francs — three hundred and fifty" —

He was choking with rage, and this sum seemed to stick in his throat. Tom tried to calm him. In the first place, all this was exaggerated ; and then the agent had enormous expenses. His rent in the Rue Royale had just been increased, — so much money out ; and it was very hard to collect any thing. And then for him it was only a temporary affair, while Lebeau had a permanent position ; and, in a house where they spent more than two hundred thousand francs a year, opportunities for profit were not wanting : but the *valet-de-chambre* did not see it in that light. His affairs did not concern any one, and you may be sure he would not let himself be cheated by a dirty rascal of an Englishman.

"Monsieur Lebeau, *vous êtes one impertinente. Je volé pas plus longtemps pâler avec vous.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Mr. Lebeau, you are an impertinent fellow. I will not talk with you any longer."

And Tom Levis started as if to go to the door. But the other blocked his way. "Going off without paying? Ah! no you won't!" His lips were pale. He put out his face, which looked like that of an angry weasel, and grumbled at the Englishman, who was still very calm, and so exasperatingly cool, that at last the *valet-de-chambre*, losing all moderation, shook his fist in his face in an insulting manner.

With the back of his hand, and quick as the parry of a sword, and with more of French than English boxing in the movement, the Englishman struck down the fist, and said in the purest tone of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, —

"No more of that, Lisette, or I fight."

The effect of these few words was amazing. Lebeau, stupefied, looked around him mechanically to see if it really was the Englishman who had spoken; then his eyes, glancing back at Tom Levis, — who was all at once very red, and whose eyes were rolling round, — lighted up with mad gayety, though flashing with anger a moment ago, and he also upset the gravity of the business-agent.

"Oh, you cursed cheat! cursed cheat! I might have suspected it. You're no more an Englishman than that."

They were laughing still harder, without being able to stop and take breath, when behind them the door of the saddle-room opened, and the queen appeared. Having stopped a moment in the next room, where she herself fastened her favorite mare, she had not lost a word of the conversation. Coming from one so beneath her, treachery troubled her but little. She knew by long experience what to expect from Lebeau, this cheating valet, the witness of all her humiliations and all her poverty. The other — the man in the cab — she hardly knew; for he was

a tradesman. But these men had just given her knowledge of strange things. So moving to Saint Mandé cost a million ; their living, which they thought so modest and so restricted, two hundred thousand francs a year, and they barely had forty thousand. How was it they had been blinded so long to their style of living, and the inadequacy of their real income? Who, then, met all these expenses? Who paid for all this luxury, — the house, the horses, and even her toilets and personal charities? Shame made her cheeks burn at the thought, while she went directly across the court-yard in the rain, and quickly ascended the little steps of the intendant's house.

Rosen, who was occupied in arranging bills, on which piles of louis were heaped, on seeing her, was so surprised that he sprang to his feet.

"No : sit still," said the queen brusquely. Leaning over the desk, on which lay her hand still wearing her riding-glove, she said, in a resolute, urgent, authoritative voice, —

"Rosen, what have we lived on for two years? Oh ! no evasions. I know that what I thought was hired has all been bought in our name, and paid for. I know that Saint Mandé alone costs us more than a million, — the million we brought from Illyria. You must tell me who has aided us since then, and from whose hands we receive the charity."

The old man's disturbed face, and the piteous trembling of his thousand little wrinkles, enlightened Frédérique.

"You? is it you?"

She would never have thought it. And while he was excusing himself, and stammering the words "duty," "gratitude," and "restoration," she said passionately,

"Duke, the king cannot take back what he has given ; and the queen must not be maintained like a dancer."

Two tears — tears of pride, which did not fall — sparkled in his eyes.

"Oh, pardon ! pardon !"

He was so humble, and kissed the tips of her fingers with such an expression of sad regret, that she continued, rather softened, —

"You must prepare a statement of all you have advanced, my dear Rosen. A receipt will be given you, and the king will discharge it as soon as possible. I shall take charge of future expenses, and shall take care that they do not exceed our income. We shall sell our horses and our carriages, and cut down the number of our attendants. Royalty in exile ought to be content with little."

The old duke started.

"Undeceive yourself, Madame. It is in exile above all that royalty needs all its prestige. Ah ! if I had been listened to, your Majesties would not have come here, in a faubourg, with an establishment which is only suitable for a stay in the bathing-season. I would have had you in a palace, in face of worldly Paris ; for I am convinced that what dethroned kings have most to fear is the free ways which bring them down when they go in the ranks and among the crowd, coming into contact with the familiarities and elbowings of the street. I know, I know ! I have often been considered ridiculous in my respect for etiquette, and for my childish and superannuated strictness. And yet these forms are more than ever important ; for they aid in preserving the proud bearing so easily lost in misfortune, like the inflexible armor which keeps the soldier on his feet even when he is wounded to death."

Frédérique did not answer for a moment. Her pure brow betokened that a sudden thought had come to her. Then, raising her head, she said, —

“It is impossible. There is a pride loftier still than that. I intend, as I told you, that, from this evening, matters shall be changed.”

Then the duke said more earnestly, and almost imploringly, —

“But your Majesty cannot think of it. Sell your horses and carriages? A sort of royal failure! What a noise, what a scandal, it would make!”

“What is happening now is even more scandalous.”

“Who knows about it? who even suspects it? How could any one suppose that it is the old miser de Rosen? You were even uncertain just now. O Madame, Madame! accept what you are pleased to call my devotion. In the first place, it would be trying the impossible. If you knew! Why, your yearly income would hardly suffice for the king’s gambling-purse.”

“The king will not play any more, Duke.”

This was said in such a tone, with such an expression in her eyes, that Rosen did not insist, but took the liberty to add, —

“I will do what your Majesty desires. But I beg you to remember that all I possess is yours, and that, in case of distress, I deserve to be applied to first.”

He felt a certainty that this would be the case before long.

On the very next day the proposed reforms began. One-half of the servants were dismissed, the useless carriages sent to Tattersall’s, where they were sold at pretty good prices, except the state carriages, which were too annoyingly conspicuous for private individuals. They got

rid of them, however, thanks to an American circus which had just been established at Paris with a large amount of flaming advertisements; and these splendid coaches, which Rosen had ordered that the royal scions might preserve a little of their lost pomp, and because he had a hope of a future return to Laybach, served for the exhibition of Chinese dwarfs and learned monkeys, historical cavalcades, and grand finale *à la Franconi*.

Towards the end of the performances, to the inspiring strains from the band, these royal carriages, with their escutcheons but partly effaced, are seen driving on the trodden gravel of the arena three times around the seats, while some grimacing, grotesque face looks out from the open window, or some famous female gymnast, with a head that looks coarse in its short hair, and a bust confined in pink-silk armor, salutes the crowd, her forehead shining with pomade and perspiration. All these venerated properties fallen into a circus, and kept between horses and huge elephants! What a presage for royalty!

Two placards on the walls announcing this sale at Tattersall's, and that of the diamonds of the Queen of Galicia at Hôtel Drouot, made considerable talk; but Paris does not pay attention to any one thing long, for its ideas follow the quickly changing sensations in the newspapers. People talked about the two sales for twenty-four hours, and the next day thought no more of them. Christian II., without making any opposition, accepted the reforms the queen desired. Since his sad escapade, his manner was almost confused when in her presence; and he lowered himself still more by the voluntary childishness which he seemed to make an excuse for his behavior.

What did he care for the reform in the house? His life, which was nothing but dissipation and pleasure, was spent away from home. It was astonishing that in six months he had not once had recourse to Rosen's purse. That raised him in the queen's eyes a little, who was, in addition, gratified at no longer having to see the Englishman's fantastic cab standing in a corner of the court-yard, and at no longer meeting the obsequious smile of courtier creditors on the staircase.

Yet the king was spending a great deal, and dissipating more than ever. Where did he get the money? Elysée found out in the most singular way through Uncle Sauvadon, that worthy man to whom he formerly gave "ideas about things," the only one of his former acquaintances whom he had retained since his entrance to the Rue Herbillon. Occasionally he used to go and breakfast with him at Bercy, and bring him news about Colette, whom he complained of no longer seeing, — his adopted child, the daughter of a poor brother whom he tenderly loved and supported till his death. He had always been wrapped up in her, paid for her nurses and baptismal cap, and, later, for her education in the most noted convent in Paris. She was his idol, his living vanity, the pretty doll which he decked with all the ambition that stirred in his vulgar, millionaire *parvenu* head; and when the little Sauvadon whispered to her uncle in the parlor of Sacré Cœur, "See that girl! her mother is a baroness, or duchess, or marchioness," the millionaire uncle would answer, with a shrug of his big shoulders, — "We will make you something better than that."

He made her a princess at eighteen. A nobility in search of dowers is not wanting in Paris. The Levis Agency has a whole assortment of titles, and one has

only to give their price. Sauvadon did not think two millions too dear to enable him to appear in a corner of a *salon* on the evenings when the young Princess de Rosen received, and to have the right to sit in a recess of a window, and look round with a broad, beaming smile on the lips that turned over like the rim of a porringer, from between short, bunchy whiskers of a style that had been out of date since Louis Philippe's time. His little gray eyes, — Colette's eyes, — with their lively, cunning expression, somewhat softened the stuttering, simple, incorrect words that came from his shapeless, thick-lipped mouth, which looked like a horse's hoof. The revelations of those big, square hands reminded one that they had rolled barrels on the wharf. When he first appeared in society, he mistrusted himself; spoke but little, and astonished and frightened people by his speechlessness. Bless me! it was not at the warehouse at Bercy, or in selling Southern wines diluted with logwood, that fine language was to be learned. But, thanks to Méraut! he had some ready-made opinions and bold aphorisms about the events of the day and the latest popular book. When the uncle talked, he managed pretty well, with the exception of bringing out his *t's* for his *s's* at the end of words in a manner startling enough to shatter the chandelier, and alarming those around this water-bearer in a white waistcoat, who heard him express, in a picturesque manner, certain theories *à la de Maistre*. But the sovereigns had taken the furnisher of his ideas away from him, and his means of showing them off. Colette, on account of her duties as maid of honor, no longer left Saint Mandé; and Sauvadon knew the head of the domestic and military house too well to hope to be admitted there. He had not even spoken of it. Imagine



the duke broaching the subject to the lofty *Frédérique* ! A wine-merchant from Bercy ! and not a retired merchant, but one, on the contrary, in active business : for, in spite of his millions and of the supplications of his niece, Sauvadon still kept at work ; spending all his time at the warehouse on the wharf, with his pen over his ear, and his white forelock all in a rumple, surrounded by truckmen and sailors unloading and loading wine-casks ; or else he was sure to be under the gigantic trees of the old park, now mutilated and cut up, and where his wealth was displayed in innumerable rows of casks under the sheds.

“ I should die if I were to give up business,” he said repeatedly. And he verily lived on the noise of rolling wine-casks, and the pleasant odor of wine ascending from the damp cellars of those large warehouses where he had made his *début* as a cooper’s boy forty-five years before. It was here that Elysée came sometimes to see his former pupil, and enjoy one of those breakfasts that can only be prepared at Bercy under the trees in the park, or in the cellar, with wine drawn on the spot, and sparkling fish fresh from the pond, prepared as a *matelote* as in the remotest part of Lauguedoc or the Vosges. He no longer desired to have ideas about things, since he could not attend *soirées* at Colette’s house : but the good man loved to hear Méraut talk, and to see him eat and drink freely ; for the wretched hovel in the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince was ever before his eyes, and he treated Elysée like one that had been shipwrecked. It was the touching thoughtfulness of a man who has known hunger towards another he knows to be poor. Méraut gave him news of his niece and her life at Saint Mandé, and brought him the reflections of those splendors which cost

the worthy man so dear, and which he would never witness. No doubt he was proud to think of the young maid of honor dining with kings and queens, posturing in a court ceremony; only his sorrow at not seeing her increased his ill humor and bitterness against the elder Rosen.

"What has he, indeed, to glory in so very much? His name and title? But did I not buy the same things with my money? His crosses, his ribbons, and his stars? Humph! I can have them, too, whenever I wish. After all, my dear M é r a u t, you do not know. Since I saw you last, good fortune has come to me."

"What is it, Uncle?"

He called him "uncle" through the affectionate familiarity peculiar to the South; the desire he felt to put into words the sympathy — not intellectual — that he felt for the great merchant.

"My dear fellow, I have the Lion of Illyria, — the cross of commander. And the duke feels so proud with his cross of the Legion of Honor! On New Year's Day, when I go to make him a visit, I shall put on my decorations: that will teach him."

Elysée could not believe it. The order of the Lion — one of the most ancient and the most sought after in Europe — given to Uncle Savaudon, — to "uncle"! And why? Because he sold diluted wine at Bercy?

"Oh, it is very simple!" said the other, blinking his little gray eyes: "I paid for the rank of commander as I did for the title of prince. A little more, and I would have had the cross of the Legion of Honor; for it also was for sale."

"Where?" asked Elysée, turning pale.

"Why, at the Levis Agency, the Rue Royale. One

can find every thing at that devil of an Englishman's. My cross cost me ten thousand francs. The ribbon was worth fifteen thousand; and I knew some one who offered that for it. Guess who. Biscarat, the great hair-dresser, — Biscarat on the Boulevard des Capucines. But, my good fellow, what I am telling you is known to all Paris. Go to Biscarat's, and you will see at the end of the large room where, surrounded by his thirty boys, he officiates, an immense photograph, in which he is represented as Figaro, with a razor in his hand, and the ribbon of the order over his shoulder. The drawing is reproduced in small size on every bottle in the store. If the general were to see that, how his mustache would go up to his nose! You know how he does it."

And he tried to imitate the general's grimace; but, as he had no mustache, it was not at all the same thing.

"Have you your brevet, Uncle? Will you show it to me?"

Elysée had a hope that there was some trickery of writing about it, a forgery in which the Levis Agency traded without scruple. But, no! all seemed regular, labelled according to form, and stamped with the arms of Illyria, bearing Boscovich's signature and that of King Christian II. Doubt was no longer possible: a business of selling crosses and ribbons had been established by permission of the king. Besides, to convince himself still further, Méraut need only go up to the councillor's as soon as he returned to Saint Mandé.

In a corner of the immense hall, which rose to the roof of the hotel, and which served as a working-room for Christian, — who never worked, — and also as an armory, gymnasium, and library, he found Boscovich among the pigeon-holes and big envelopes of wrapping-

paper, and sheets of paper laid one over the other, and between which the plants that had been recently gathered were drying. Since his exile, the *savant* had begun to make a collection from the Paris woods of Vincennes and Boulogne, where the richest flora in France are found. Besides, he had purchased the herbarium of a famous naturalist who had just died ; and absorbed in the examination of his new riches, with his bloodless face, from which one could not judge his age, bowed over a magnifying-glass, he was raising with precaution the heavy pages, between which were plants spread out from their corolla to the roots, and whose tints were lost on the edges. He uttered a cry of joy and admiration when the specimen was intact and well preserved, looked at it a long time with delight, reading its Latin name aloud, and a description written at the bottom in a little note. At other times an exclamation of anger escaped him on seeing the flower attacked and perforated by the imperceptible worm, well known to herbarium-keepers, — an atom born of the dust of plants, on which it also maintains its life, and which endangers and often destroys collections. The stem was still sound ; but, as soon as the page was stirred, every thing fell to pieces and floated off, flowers and roots, in a light cloud.

“It is a worm, a worm !” said Boscovich, with his magnifying-glass over his eye ; and, in a manner that was both grieved and proud, he pointed out a perforation similar to that of the borer in wood, and which indicated the monster’s passage.

Elysée could not suspect him. This monomaniac was incapable of infamy, and also of the least opposition. At the first word about decorations, he began to tremble, looking sideways from under his glass, with timidity and

mistrust. What was this that he had just said to him? No doubt the king lately had made him prepare a quantity of brevets of every grade, with a blank for the name ; but he knew nothing more about them, and never would have asked.

"Well, Councillor," said Elysée gravely, "I warn you that his Majesty is trading his crosses with the Levis Agency."

Thereupon he told the story about the Gascon barber which so amused all Paris. Boscovich gave one of his little womanish screams ; but at heart he was only very slightly shocked, for he felt very little interest in any thing which did not concern his mania. His herbarium which he left at Laybach represented his country to him ; and that which he was preparing, his exile in France.

"But don't you see it is unworthy a man like you to lend a hand to such shameful intrigues?"

Boscovich, who was in despair because his eyes had been forced open to what he did not wish to see, stammered, —

"But — but what can I do, my good Monsieur Méraut? The king is the king. When he says, 'Boscovich, write that,' my hand obeys without my thought, particularly when his Majesty is so kind and so generous to me. It was he who, seeing my despair at the loss of my herbarium, made me a present of this one. Fifteen hundred francs, — a magnificent opportunity ; and I have had the 'Hortus Cliffortianus' of Linnæus into the bargain, and the earliest edition."

Thus naively and cynically the poor man bared his conscience. All within him was dry and dead, and of the color of the treasures in his herbarium. His mania, which was as cruel as the invisible worm of naturalists,

had perforated and consumed every thing. He felt no emotion, except when Elysée threatened to notify the queen. Then only the monomaniac dropped his glass, and made his avowals in a low voice, and with deep sighs like a penitent at the confessional. Many things took place before his eyes which he could not help, and which troubled him. The king had bad company about him. And then what can you expect? He had no desire to reign, — no taste for the throne ; nor had he ever.

“ But tarry a moment ! I remember : it was a long time ago, in the lifetime of the late Leopold, when the king had his first attack as he left the table ; and, when they told Christian that he would no doubt succeed his uncle, the child — he was hardly twelve, and played croquet in the court-yard of the residence — began to weep, and wept immoderately, having an hysterical attack. ‘ I will not be a king ! I will not be a king ! ’ he said. ‘ Let them place my cousin Stanislas in my place. ’ The look that I have often seen since then in Christian’s eyes has reminded me of the startled and frightened expression in them that morning, as he clung with all his might to his mallet, as if he were afraid they would carry him into the throne-hall ; and he kept crying, ‘ I will not be a king ! ’ ”

Christian’s whole character was shown in this anecdote. Oh, no ! without doubt, he was not a wicked man, but childish, married too young, with uncontrollable passions and hereditary vices. The life that he led — nights at the club, with women, and suppers — is the normal existence of husbands in a certain class of society. All was aggravated by his having to fill the *rôle* of king when he did not know how, and to assume responsibilities above his capacity and strength, and, above all, by

this protracted exile, which was slowly demoralizing him. Firmer natures than his could not withstand this breaking-up of fixed habits, this doubt of the future, this hope, anguish, and expectancy, which enervated him.

Exile, like the sea, has its torpor: it beats down and swallows up; it is a phase of transition. One cannot escape the *ennui* of long passages, except by fixed occupations and hours of regular study.

But how can a king occupy his time when he no longer has a people or ministers or council, nothing to decide or sign, and far too much mind or scepticism to amuse himself by pretending all these things, and far too much ignorance to attempt a diversion in any other assiduous work?

Then exile is the sea; but it means also shipwreck, throwing the first-class passengers pell-mell among those of the deck, and in the open air. It needs a proud bearing, a truly royal temperament, not to be affected by familiarity, and the degrading promiscuous society for which one will later blush and suffer,—to be a king in the midst of privations, distress and disgrace, which bring classes together, and confuse them in one wretched humanity.

Alas! this Bohemia of exile, from which the Duke of Rosen had so long preserved it at great sacrifice, began at last to affect the house of Illyria. The king was at his wits' end to pay the expenses of his "enjoying himself." He began to give notes like a son who has not come into his property, finding this very simple, and even more convenient, with Tom Levis's help, than the "good on our bank," which he formerly addressed to the head of the domestic and military service. The notes came due, and were increased by many renewals, till the day when Tom Levis, finding himself hard up, invented this pretty trade

in brevets ; a king without a people, or civil list, having no other resource. The poor Lion of Illyria, cut up like an old ox, was divided into quarters and slices, sold at auction and at the butcher's shop for so much the mane, the pope's eye, the side-pieces, and the claws.

And this was only the beginning. In Tom Levis's cab the king would not stop on a road made so smooth for him. This is what Méraut said to himself as he went down from Boscovich. He saw plainly that the councillor could not be depended upon, being as easy to be deceived as are all those who have a mania. He himself was too new, too much a stranger in the house, to have any authority over Christian's mind. What if he should apply to the elder Rosen? At the first words of the preceptor, the duke cast upon him the terrible look of one whose religion had been attacked. The king, however low he had fallen, was still the king to him ; and there was no help to expect from the monk, whose tawny face only appeared at long intervals between two journeys, when it looked thinner and more sunburnt.

And the queen? But he had seen her looking sad and restless for some months, her beautiful, pure forehead being always shadowed with care ; and, when she came to the lessons, she only listened absent-mindedly, her work lying idly in her hands. Grave thoughts disturbed her ; and they were strange ones to her, as they rose from common things, anxiety about money, and the humiliating thought of all those hands held out which she could no longer fill, — tradespeople, the needy companions of exile and misfortune ; for this sad calling of sovereign has cares, even when it no longer has rights. All those who learned the way to the prosperous house now waited hours in the anteroom, and, weary of waiting, often went



away uttering words that the queen divined, rather than heard, by their discontented step, and their weariness of having been sent away three times.

She really tried to bring order into their new mode of life ; but misfortune, bad investments, and paralyzed values threatened it. They must wait, or lose every thing. Poor Queen Frédérique, who thought she knew every thing relating to suffering, had yet no experience in those trials which wear one out, — the hard and wounding contact with commonplace, every-day life. As the end of the months drew near, she would think of them at night, and shudder, like the head of a business-house. Sometimes a servant's wages were overdue ; and she feared to believe that delay of an order, or a more determined look, meant his discontent. Finally she became acquainted with debt, — the debt which is gradually harassing, and in the insolence of its demands forces open the loftiest and most beautifully gilded doors. The old duke gravely and silently watched the queen's anguish of mind, and constantly made excuse to be near her, as if to say, "I am here." But she determined to exhaust every thing before breaking her word, and applying to the one she crushed with so haughty a lesson.

They were passing one evening in the large *salon* as drearily as usual, the king, as always, being absent, and in the light of silver candlesticks were preparing a whist-table for what was called the queen's game ; the duke sitting opposite her Majesty, with Madame Eleonora and Boscovich for opponents.

The princess was playing in an undertone a few of those "Echoes of Illyria" which Frédérique was never weary of hearing, and which at the least sign of satisfaction the musician changed into a war-chant or *bravura*.

These reminders of their country, which brought a beautiful smile and heroic expression, brightened the atmosphere around these resigned exiles, and varied the ways of life acquired in this elegant *salon* which sheltered royalty. Ten o'clock struck. The queen, instead of ascending to her apartments, as was her custom every evening, and giving a signal to retire by her departure, cast an anxious look around her, and said, —

“You can withdraw. I have work to attend to with Monsieur Méraut.”

Elysée, who was busy reading near the fireplace, bowed as he closed the pamphlet whose leaves he was turning, and passed into the study for pens, ink, and other writing materials.

When he returned, the queen was alone, listening to the carriages rolling into the court-yard, while the great gateway closed behind them ; and in the passages and on the stairway of the hotel were heard the going and coming which in a large household precede the hour for retiring. All was silent at last ; the silence being intensified by two leagues of woodland, where the rustling of the wind through the leaves deadened the distant rumbling of Paris. The deserted *salon*, which was still lighted, seemed in its calm solitude as if ready for some tragic scene. Frédérique, leaning her elbow on the table, pushed away the blotting-paper prepared by Méraut.

“No, no ! We are not to work this evening,” she said. “It was an excuse. Sit down, and let us talk.”

Then she added in a lower voice, —

“I have something to ask you.”

But what she had to tell him probably cost her a great effort ; for she reflected a moment, with her mouth and eyes partly closed, and with that worn, extremely old

expression which Elysée had seen in them sometimes, and which made the beautiful face still more beautiful, marked as it was by all her devotion and sacrifices, and its pure lines deepened through her loftiest sentiments as a queen and woman. She also inspired him with a religious respect. Finally, summoning all her courage, Frédérique asked in a very low voice and timid manner, bringing out one word after the other, as if they were groping steps taken in dread, if he did not know "one of those — one of those places in Paris where they — lent money on security."

To ask that of Elysée, of this great Bohemian, who knew all the Parisian pawn-shops, and had used them for twenty years as a place to fall back upon, — where he put his summer clothing in winter, and his winter garments in summer! Did he know the "*clou*"? did he know "*ma tante*"? This slang of the poor, returning with the memory of his youth, brought a momentary smile to his lips. But the queen continued, while trying to make her voice firm: —

"I would like to intrust something to you to take there, — some jewels. One has moments of embarrassment sometimes."

Her beautiful eyes were now raised, and revealed a deep abyss of calm and superhuman grief.

Want among kings! so much grandeur humiliated! Was it possible?

Mérait made a sign with his head that he was ready to take charge of whatever was desired.

If he had uttered a word, he would have sobbed. If he had made a movement, he would have fallen at the feet of this great distress. And yet his admiration began to change to pity. The queen now seemed to him a

little lower, a little less above the vulgarities of life, as if, in the sad avowal she had made, he caught a Bohemian accent, something like the beginning of a downfall, which brought her nearer to him.

She rose suddenly, went to the crystal box, and took out the forgotten antique relic, which she placed on the table-cloth. It was a handful of jewels of every ray of color.

Elysée trembled. The crown !

“Yes, the crown ! It has been in the house of Illyria six hundred years. Kings have died, and streams of noble blood have been shed, to defend it. At present it must help us to live. We have nothing left but this.”

It was of fine old gold, — a magnificent closed diadem, whose circles, relieved by ornaments, joined above the cap of ruby velvet. Over the circles, above the bandeau of twisted filagree, in the heart of each gem which represented the veining of the clover-leaf, the point of the scalloped open-work arches supporting them, contained every known variety of stones, — the transparent blue sapphire, the velvety-blue turquoise, the topaz of the pale hues of dawn, the flame-colored Oriental ruby, and emeralds that were like drops of water on leaves, the cabalistic opal, and the pearls of the milky iris ; but, overpowering them all, the diamonds, scattered everywhere, radiated from their facets a thousand varied fires, like luminous dust or a cloud full of sunlight, and blended and softened the brilliancy of the diadem, causing it to gleam with the subdued vermilion light of a lamp as seen at the end of a sanctuary.

The queen placed her trembling finger in this place and that place, remarking, —

“Some of the stones must be taken out, — the largest.”

“With what?”

They spoke in a low voice, like two criminals; but, seeing nothing in the *salon* which could answer, Frédérique said, —

“Hold the light for me.”

They passed into the glass veranda, where the tall lamp they carried made fantastic shadows, and cast a long stream of light, which vanished on the lawns in the darkness of the garden.

“No, no! not the scissors,” she murmured, seeing him move towards her work-basket. “They are not strong enough. I have tried.”

Finally they discovered a pair of gardener’s shears on the tub of a pomegranate-tree whose delicate branches sought the moonlight against the glass. Both having returned to the *salon*, Elysée tried to raise with the point of the instrument an enormous oval sapphire, which the queen pointed out to him; but the polished stone, being firmly set, resisted, slipped from under the iron, immovable in its clutch. Besides, the hand of the operator — fearing to injure the stone or to break the setting, which bore, in marks on its gold, traces of previous attempts — was neither strong nor sure. The royalist suffered, and was indignant at the outrage that they made him do the crown, the symbol of all the sovereignties. And it seemed really alive. He could feel it shudder, resist, and struggle.

“I cannot! I cannot!” he said, wiping the perspiration from his forehead.

The queen replied, —

“You must.”

“But it will show.”

Frédérique gave a proud, ironical smile.

"Will show ! Is there any one who even looks at it ? And who thinks of it, who takes care of it here, except myself ?"

While Elysée resumed his task with bowed head and pale face, with his long hair tumbling in his eyes, and with the royal diadem between his knees, which the shears were clipping and cutting, Frédérique, holding the lamp high above her, was watching the attempt as cold as the stones which were shining among pieces of gold on the table-cloth, intact and splendid in spite of having been torn out.

The next day, Elysée who had been out all the morning, returned soon after the first breakfast-bell, and seated himself at table moved and disturbed, and hardly joining in the conversation of which he was usually the light and spirit. This agitation affected the queen without in the least checking her smile, or changing the serene tones of her contralto voice ; and, when the repast was over, it was long before they could come together, and be able to talk freely, being watched through the etiquette and rules which had been established in the house, which necessitated the service of a lady of honor, and the jealous *surveillance* of Madame de Silvis. Finally, it was the lesson-hour. While the little prince was settling himself to work, and preparing his books, the queen said to Elysée, —

"What is the matter ? What has happened to me now ?"

"Ah, Madame ! all the stones are false."

"False ?"

"And very carefully imitated in paste."

"How was it done ? By whom ? There is a traitor in the house, then ?"

She grew fearfully pale at the word "traitor ;" and suddenly clinching her teeth, with a look of despair and anger in her eyes, she answered, —

"It is true. There is a traitor here, and you and I know him well."

Then with a nervous gesture, taking Elysée's hand passionately, as if in a compact known to themselves alone, she added, —

"But we will never denounce him, will we?"

"Never !" he answered, turning away his eyes ; for, in a word, they understood each other.

## CHAPTER VII.

## JOYS OF THE PEOPLE.

It was the afternoon of the first Sunday in May, — a splendid, bright day, a month ahead of the season, and so warm that they had taken off the top of the landau in which Queen Frédérique, the little prince, and his governor were riding in the Bois de Saint Mandé. This first caress of spring, which came through the young new branches, warmed the queen's heart, and brightened the face under the blue silk umbrella. She felt happy without reason ; and for some hours, forgetting her hardships amid the universal loveliness, she leaned back in a corner of the heavy vehicle, with her child pressed against her, and abandoned herself to the intimacy and the security of a familiar talk with Elysée Méraut, who sat opposite them.

"It is singular," she said to him, "but it seems to me we must have met before we became acquainted. Your voice and face at once awoke a memory within me. Where can we have met the first time?"

Little Zara remembered that first time very well. It was in the convent in the church under the ground, where Monsieur Elysée frightened him so. And in the gentle, timid eyes which the child turned towards his teacher, one could still see a little of that superstitious fear. But, no : even before this Christmas evening, the queen was convinced that she had met him.



"Unless it was in another life," she added, almost seriously.

Elysée laughed.

"Indeed, your Majesty is not mistaken. You saw me not in another life, but in Paris, on the very day of your arrival. I was opposite the Hôtel des Pyramides, mounted on the lower part of the fence of the Tuileries."

"And you shouted, 'Long live the king!' Now I remember. Then it was you. Oh, how glad I am! It was you who first gave us a welcome. If you knew how much good your words did me."

"And myself also," continued Méraut. "It was so long since I had an opportunity to utter that triumphant cry of 'Long live the king!'—so long, that it sang on my lips. They were the household words in my family, and associated with all the joys of my childhood and youth; and by them, in our own home, we expressed our emotions and beliefs. That cry, when I hear it, recalls my father's Southern accent, voice, and gesture; it brings the same tears to my eyes that I saw in his so many times. Poor man! it was instinctive with him,—a profession of faith in one word. One day, while passing through Paris on his return from a journey to Frohsdorff, my father went through the Place du Carrousel as Louis Philippe was coming out from there. The people belonging to the class that were seen at the close of the Empire were waiting and hanging to the fence, and were indifferent and even hostile. My father, on learning that the king was to pass, pushed the crowd aside, and elbowed his way through to the first row to see him near to, and crush with scornful looks this brigand and rascal of a Louis Philippe, who had stolen the place of the legitimate king. Suddenly the king appeared, and crossed

the deserted court, amid an oppressive, deathlike silence, that weighed on all the palace, and in which it seemed as if they could distinctly hear the firing of the guns of the mob cracking the planks of the throne. Louis Philippe, who was already old and very much of a *bourgeois*, approached the fence with little, mincing steps, with his umbrella in his hand. There was nothing of the sovereign, nothing of the master, about him. But this my father did not see; and as he thought that in the great palace of the kings of France, which was paved with glorious memories, the representative of the monarchy was coming out through the frightful solitude which is made around royalty by the hatred of the people, something stirred within him, and rebelled. He forgot all his bitterness, took off his hat suddenly, and instinctively cried, or sobbed rather, 'Long live the king!' in such ringing, earnest tones, that the old man started, and thanked him with a look full of emotion."

"I should have thanked you thus," said Frédérique; and her eyes rested on Méraut with such tender gratitude, that the poor fellow felt himself grow pale. She resumed almost immediately, full of the recital she had just heard:—

"But your father was not of the nobility?"

"Oh, no, Madame! a very low-born, humble man, a working-man, a weaver."

"It is singular," said Frédérique dreamily.

Méraut answered her, and an endless discussion began. The queen did not love, and did not understand, the people, and had a kind of physical horror of them. She thought them rude and alarming in their joys as in their revenge. Even in the holy festivals, during the honeymoon of her reign, she was afraid of them,—of their

thousand hands held out to applaud, and which she felt made her a prisoner. They had never been able to agree. Pardons, favors, and alms had fallen from her hands to theirs, like those unblessed harvests which cannot germinate, though there be no reason to positively blame the sterility of the soil or the barrenness of the seeds. Among the fairy-tales with which Madame de Silvis created a kind of mist in the mind of the little prince, there was a story about a young lady of Syria married to a lion, who was horribly frightened by the roaring of her tawny-colored husband, and his violent way of shaking his mane. This poor lion, however, was full of attention and loving delicacy: he brought home rare game and honeycomb to his child-wife, and watched over her while she slept, and imposed silence on the sea, forests, and animals. But, for all this, she felt the same repulsion and fear, which wounded him so greatly that he got angry one day, and, opening his mouth and flashing his mane, roared a terrible "Begone!" as if he had as great a desire to devour her as to give her her liberty. This story would describe Frédérique's attitude towards her people; and, since Elysée had lived under her roof, he tried in vain to make her admit the concealed goodness, chivalric devotion, and shy susceptibility of this great lion who roared so many times in joke before getting into a rage. Ah! if the kings had so willed,—if they had shown themselves less defiant! And, as Frédérique waved her sunshade doubtfully, he continued, —

"Yes: I know very well. The people frighten you; but you do not love them, or rather you do not know them. Look around you, your Majesty, in these paths and under these trees. The people who are walking and amusing

themselves here are from the most terrible faubourg in Paris, through whose unpaved streets flows the tide of revolutions. They all look so simple, good, natural, and innocent ; and how they enjoy the delights of a day of rest in a bright season ! ”

From the broad mall through which the landau was slowly passing, one saw, indeed, among the shrubbery, which was still bare of leaves, though the ground was blue with early wild hyacinths, breakfasts spread out on the grass dotted with white plates ; baskets with gaping covers ; stout bottles from the wine-merchants' shops, like so many great bullfinches hiding in the young vegetation ; shawls and blouses hung on the branches, the women in waists and the men in shirt-sleeves, — some reading, some taking naps, others making elaborate carving on the trunks of trees ; bright glades, where one saw bits of some cheap stuff tossed about in a game of shuttlecock, and blind-man's-buff, or some quadrille improvised to the music of an invisible band borne on the wind at intervals. There were children without number, making a link between the company at table and the players, running from one family to another, leaping and shouting, filling the whole wood with a warbling like that of swallows ; and their endless flitting to and fro had also the same swift, capricious, shadowy fluttering in the sunlit branches. As a contrast to the Bois de Boulogne, swept, raked, protected by its little rustic bars, this wood of Vincennes, with every avenue free, seemed well suited for the holiday sports of a people, with its green grass trodden down, its sturdy trees bent low, as if nature here were more generous and more lively.

All at once, at the turn of the path, the sudden flood of air and light from the lake, breaking through the foliage

of the wood around its turf-covered banks, drew from the royal child a cry of enthusiasm. It was superb, like the sea suddenly disclosed to view after the labyrinth of bare rocks of a village in Brittany, the tide flowing to the foot of the nearest lane. Sailing-barks, filled with boatmen in bright colors of blue and red, were literally ploughing the lake ; while the silvery strokes of oars mingled their foamy plashing with the sparkling play of little waves.

Ducks in line were swimming along, uttering their sharp cries ; and swans, with their more sweeping, graceful motion, were following the long curve along the borders, their light wings ruffled by the breeze ; while far in the background, screened by the green curtain of an island, the band sent joyous strains through the wood, to which the surface of the lake served as a sounding-board. In addition to all this, there was a lively commotion, — the stir of wind and wave, the flapping of streamers, the calls of boatmen, and the picture formed by people seated on the slopes, of children playing, and of two noisy little *cafés* built close to the water, with a plank of resonant wood for a bridge. In the open space beneath the *cafés* were bathing and sailing boats. There were but few carriages on the borders of the lake ; but from time to time they saw a depot-cab carrying home a couple the day after their wedding in the suburbs, and who were to be recognized by the new overcoats and the gayly figured shawls ; and business jaunting-cars with their signs in gold letters, and laden with stout ladies with flower-bedecked hats, who looked with pity on the pedestrians crowding the paths. But most worthy of observation were the little baby-carriages, the first domestic luxury of a workman, those moving cradles, in which little heads framed in ruched caps nod happily and fall asleep

while watching the interlacing of the branches against the blue sky.

During this promenade of little people, the carriage with Illyrian arms, harness, and livery, excited considerable astonishment wherever it passed, Frédérique having never come there excepting on week-days. The people were elbowing each other about; and the bands of workmen with their families, who were silent and felt stiff and restrained in their best clothes, moved aside at the sound of wheels, then turned round, and did not conceal their enthusiastic admiration of the queen's haughty beauty and the aristocratic appearance of little Zara.

Now and then a little bold face would pop out from the hedge, and a voice would cry out, —

“Good morning, Madame!”

Was it Elysée's words, the splendid weather, or the joyousness which extended even to the distant horizon, which—the factories being idle—was clear as in the real country, or was it this cordial greeting, which made Frédérique feel a kind of sympathy for this Sunday of the workmen, who were almost all touchingly neat, considering their hard labor and rare leisure?

As for Zara, he could not keep still, but fairly shook with delight, and would have liked to leave the carriage, and roll on the lawns and sail in the boats with the other children.

Soon the landau reached paths that were less noisy, where people were reading and sleeping on benches, and couples were walking close beside each other through the groves. There was mystery here in the shade, with the air cooled by fountains, and with the real woody scents of the forest, and with birds chirping in the branches. But, as they left the lake where it was noisiest behind

them, the echo of another gay party reached their ears distinctly. Shots, the rattling of money-boxes and tambourines, the sound of trumpets and ringing of bells, were heard apart from a wave of sound which suddenly rolled towards them like a cloud of smoke over the sun.

"What is the matter? What is it we hear?" asked the little prince.

"The Gingerbread Fair, your Highness," said the old coachman, turning round on his seat; and, as the queen consented to approach the festive scene, the carriage, which was now out of the park, wound through a number of lanes and partly built roads, where new houses, six stories high, rose by the side of wretched hovels, and between a gutter from the stable and a market-garden. Everywhere were small pleasure-gardens, with arbors and little tables, and the posts of a swing all, painted the same ugly green. Streams of people poured out from them, and there was a crowd of soldiers, — the shakos of artillery-men, the white gloves. They made but little noise, and were listening to the harpist and violinist walking around, and who, having permission to play between the tables, were rattling off an air from "*Favorita*" or "*Trovatore*;" for this mocking people of Paris adores sentimental music, and bestows its money freely when amused.

Suddenly the landau stops. Carriages go no farther than the entrance to this broad court-yard of Vincennes, along which the fair-grounds extend, having for a background, in the direction of Paris, the two columns of the Gate du Trône, which rise in the dusty atmosphere of the suburbs. The sight of a bustling crowd beyond, in a real street of immense booths, made Zara's eyes kindle with such eager, childlike curiosity, that the queen proposed

to alight. This desire of the proud Frédérique to go on foot through the dust of a Sunday crowd was so extraordinary, that Elysée was surprised, and hesitated.

"There is danger, then?" said the queen.

"Oh ! not the least, Madame. Only, if we go on the fair-grounds, it is better that no one should accompany us. The livery would cause too much remark."

At the queen's orders, the tall footman, who was about to follow them, resumed his place on the box ; and they agreed that the carriage should wait. They did not, however, intend to go all around the fair-grounds, but only walk a few steps in front of the first booths.

At the entrance there were little movable benches, a table covered with a white napkin, and firing at rabbits, and roundabouts. The people passed by disdainfully, without stopping. Then there was something being fried in the open air, which gave out a choking odor of burnt grease ; and rosy flames burst forth, between which and piles of sugared fritters kitchen-boys dressed in white were moving busily two and fro. And the maker of marshmallow-paste was pulling and twisting into great rings the white mass fragrant with almond. The little prince looked on with amazement. It was so new to him, who, caged like a canary, had been brought up in the lofty rooms of a castle, enclosed within the gilded fence of a park ; and who had grown up amid scenes of terror and distrust, walking out only when accompanied, and never seeing the people, except from a balcony, or a carriage surrounded with guards.

At first he felt frightened, and walked close to his mother, holding her hand tightly ; but gradually he became excited by the noise and the odors, and the grinding of the organs. To judge by the manner in which he



pulled Frédérique along, he seemed to have a mad desire to run, and was in a conflict between the desire to stop everywhere and that of going ahead ; on and on, — yonder, where the noise was loudest and the crowd was largest. Thus, without perceiving it, they were farther away from the starting-point, as unconscious of it as the swimmer whom the water floats along, and the more easily because no one remarked them ; because, among all those flashy toilets, the queen's graceful costume of several tawny shades — dress, cloak, and hat to match — passed unnoticed, as the quiet elegance of Zara, with large starched collar, short jacket, and bare calves, merely caused several good women to say, "He is English." He walked between his mother and Elysée, who smiled to each other at his joy.

"O Mother ! see that ! Monsieur Elysée, what are they doing over there ? Let us go and see." And, from one end of the avenue to the other, they went in curious zigzags deeper into the thickening crowd, following its swaying motion.

"Suppose we return," proposes Elysée ; but the child is like one intoxicated. He entreats, and pulls his mother's hand ; and she is so happy at seeing her little sleepy one roused from his torpor, and she herself is so excited by the fermentation of the people, that they go on farther and farther. The day becomes hotter, as if the sun on going down were gathering stormy mists at the end of its beams ; and, as the sky changes, the *fête* with its thousand colors assumes a fairy-like aspect. It is the hour for parade. All the members of the circus and the people in the booths are out under the banners of the entrance, in front of the canvas signs, which swell with the wind, making the large animals, acrobats, and gymnasts that are painted on them seem alive.

This is the exhibition of the great military piece, a display of Charles IX. and Louis XV. costumes, arquebuses, guns, wigs, and plumes mingled together, with the "Marseillaise" played by the brass band. Opposite, colts belonging to a circus, and guided by white reins, like a bride's horses, perform some masterly steps on the platforms, count with their hoofs, and bow from the chest; and on one side the real mountebank's booth exhibits its clown in a checked vest, its little Aztecs in their tights, and a tall girl with sunburnt face, dressed in pink like a ballet-dancer, and who tosses gold and silver balls, bottles, and knives, their shining, clinking, metal blades crossing above her hair, which is piled up and fastened with glass pins.

The little prince is rapt in admiration of this beautiful person, till a queen — a real queen of fairy-tales, with a brilliant diadem, and a short tunic of silvery gauze, and feet crossed one over the other — appears before him leaning over the balustrade.

He would never have wearied of looking at her, had not the band diverted him, — an extraordinary band, composed neither of French guards nor acrobats in pink tights, but of real men of the world. A gentleman with short whiskers, shining pate, and soft boots, deigned to play the cornet; while a lady, — a real lady, having a somewhat solemn appearance like Madame de Silvis, — in a silk mantle, and hat trimmed with waving flowers, was looking to the right and left, shaking a big money-box, and jerking out her arms till the chenille fringe of her mantle was tossed up into the roses on her hat.

Who could tell? Perhaps she, too, was a member of some royal family whom misfortune had befallen.

But the fair-ground presented many other astonishing

sights. In an endless but continually varied panorama were bears dancing ; negroes wearing only a strip of linen ; men and women devils in close purple skull-caps ; wrestlers struggling ; famous tumblers with one fist on their hips, and balancing above the crowd the tights destined for the amateur ; a fencing-mistress in a cuirass waist, and red stockings with gold coins, her face covered with a mask, and hands in leather gauntlet-gloves like those of a jester ; a man in black velvet, who resembled Columbus or Copernicus, describing magic circles with a diamond-headed whip ; while from behind the platform there arose a dead odor of hide and the stable, and one heard the roar of the wild beasts in the Garel menagerie. All these living curiosities were mingled with those which were only represented by paintings, — female giants in ball-dress, with bare shoulders, and their arms from the short sleeve to the closely buttoned glove in pink eider-down ; clairvoyants looking into the future as they sat with bandaged eyes, and near them a black-bearded doctor ; monsters, freaks of nature, and every kind of eccentricity and queer-looking object, which were sometimes curtained only by two large sheets held by a cord, with the money-box for the proceeds on a chair.

And everywhere, at every step, was to be seen the king of the *fête*, — gingerbread of every shape and appearance, that was found in stores draped with red and fringed with gold. It was covered with satin figured paper, tied with favors, and decorated with sugar-work and roasted almonds. It was in the form of men, flat, and of a grotesque appearance, and represented Parisian celebrities, Amanda's lover, Prince Queue de Poule with his inseparable Rigolo. The gingerbread, which exhaled

a pleasant fragrance of honey and cooked fruits, was carried in baskets and on portable stands through the slowly moving crowd, which was closely packed, and among which progression was becoming very difficult. It was impossible at present to retrace one's steps. It was necessary to follow this despotic current, to move unconsciously, pushed forward and backward towards this booth, then to the other ; for the living wave which presses to the centre of the festivities tries to make its way out at the sides where there is not a possibility of finding an opening. There are bursts of laughter, and jokes are made during this continual and unavoidable elbowing.

The queen has never seen the people so near. With their breath almost in her face, and feeling the rough contact of their strong shoulders, she is astonished at feeling neither disgust nor terror, and advances with the others with the hesitating step one takes in a crowd whose solemn tread seems like that of an advancing host when there are no carriages.

The good humor of all these people, the exuberant gayety of her son, and the quantities of baby-carriages continuing to wind about in the thickest of the crowd, re-assure her.

"Don't push ! don't you see there is a baby?" — not one, but ten, twenty, hundreds of children borne on the mothers' bosoms and on the fathers' backs. And Frédérique gives an amiable smile when she sees pass one of these little children of the people of about the same age as her son. Elysée begins to feel anxious. He knows what a crowd is, calm as it may be in appearance, and the danger of its ebb and flow. If one of those big clouds above them should burst into rain, what a panic and confusion there would be ! And his imagination,

which was always lively, pictured the scene, — the horrible stifling, the crowding close together, and such crushes as are seen in the Place Louis XV., that formidable rushing of a whole people to the centre of an overcrowded Paris, and but two steps from large deserted avenues that could not be reached.

The little prince feels very warm between his tutor and his mother, who hold him up and protect him. He complains of not being able to see any thing. Then, like the workmen around him, Elysée lifts him, and carries him on his shoulder : and the little fellow bursts into new exclamations of delight ; for from that height the view of the scene is splendid. Against a sunset sky traversed by alternate streams of light and floating shadow, far away in the dim perspective between two columns of a gate, flutter banners and bright colors and the canvas in front of the booths. The light wheels of the great fandangoes raise one by one the small cars filled with people ; and an immense merry-go-round with three tiers, varnished and colored like a plaything, turns mechanically with its fantastic lions, leopards, and *tarasques*, on which the children are as stiff in their motions as little jumping-jacks. Nearer clusters of red balloons are flying in the air ; and innumerable windmills of yellow paper are revolving like suns in fireworks, and, rising above the crowd, are quantities of little heads with hair light as smoke, like Zara's. The rays of the setting sun, now paling, threw on the clouds reflections of brilliant color, lighting and darkening objects in turn, and giving still greater movement to the perspective. They fall on a harlequin and a colombine, two frisking white spots, — one opposite the other in a pantomime in chalk on the dark background of a booth ; yonder a tall bent fellow with the pointed hat of a Greek shepherd is

making motions as if he were pushing the dark stream of people on the steps of his booth inside, as one shovels into an oven. This fellow keeps his mouth wide open ; but, though he shouts and roars, no one can hear him any more than they can hear a bell which is furiously rung in the corner of a platform, or the firing of a gun just loaded and discharged. Every separate sound is lost in the general uproar of elements made up of all kinds of discords, — rattles and reed-pipes, gongs, tambourines, speaking-trumpets, the roaring of wild beasts, organs from Barbary, and whistling of steamboats. Each tried to see who could use the noisiest instrument the longest to attract the crowd, as one captures bees by noise ; and from the tilts and swings came shrill screams, while every ten minutes the whistle of steam-cars passing on a level with the fair-grounds rose above this mad din.

Suddenly fatigue, and the stifling air among the crowd, and the dazzling sun which for five hours has been sending down hot, oblique rays, in which many brilliant, flashing things have been revolving, make the queen giddy ; and, overcome, she stops. She has only time to seize Elysée's arm to save herself from falling ; and, while she supports herself and clings to him, erect and pale, she murmurs in a very low voice, "Nothing : it is nothing." But her head, in which the nerves were painfully throbbing, and her whole body, lose sensation for a moment. "Oh, never will this moment be forgotten !" thought Elysée.

But it is over. Frédéric is strong now. A breath of fresh air on her forehead has revived her ; yet she does not let go of her protector's arm : and the footsteps of his queen keeping pace with his, and the warm, gloved hand on his arm, cause him inexpressible emotion. The danger, the crowd, Paris, and the *fête* are forgotten : he

is in the impossible country where dreams are realized in all their magic and extravagance.

Lost in the multitude, he walks without hearing or seeing it, borne on as on a cloud enveloping him to the eyes, and carried insensibly out of the avenue. And there he comes back to earth, and becomes conscious of what is around him. The queen's carriage is far away : there is no means of reaching it. They must walk to the Rue Herbillon, following wide paths in the fading light and the streets that were lined with inns full of people, and merry-makers passing by. It is a reale scapade ; but none of them think of their strange manner of returning. The little Zara keeps up a continual chatter like all children after a *fête*, eager to express through their little mouths the impressions and ideas received through their eyes.

Elysée and the queen remained silent. He, still trembling, tried to recall and again to banish the memory of the delicious and thrilling moment which revealed to him the secret, the sad secret, of his life. Frédérique is thinking of all the strange new things she has seen. For the first time she has felt the beating of the people's heart ; she has leaned her head on the lion's shoulder, and has received a strong, sweet impression, like a loving, protecting clasp of the arms.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE GREAT SCHEME.

THE door was shut in a brusque, lordly manner, sending a gust of wind from one end of the agency to the other, causing a flutter among blue veils, the little feathers in travelling hats, mackintoshes, and the bills held between the clerks' fingers. Hands were extended, and heads bowed. J. Tom Levis had just entered. He cast a smile around, gave two or three orders to the book-keeper, stayed only long enough to ask, in an extraordinarily exultant tone, if they had "sent off the package to his Highness the Prince of Wales," and was already in his office. The clerks winked to each other that their employer was in a good humor. It was very evident that something new had happened. The quiet Sephora herself, behind the railing of her desk, understood this, and said to Tom, in a low voice, when he entered, —

"What has happened?"

"Great things," answered Tom, with a broad, silent laugh, and rolling his eyes around, as was his way on great occasions.

"Come!" he beckoned to his wife. And both descended the fifteen steep, narrow steps, edged with copper, and which led to a small boudoir on the lower floor, which was very daintily carpeted and hung with drapery, and contained a lounge and dressing-table, and was always lighted by gas; the little port-hole, through which



came the daylight from the Rue Royale, being closed by ground glass as thick as horn. From here one gained entrance to the cellars and yard, which enabled Tom to go in and out, without being seen, to avoid bores and creditors, who are called, in Parisian slang, "*parés*;" that is to say, people or things who obstruct circulation. In business as complicated as that of the agency, such *ruses* are indispensable; for life otherwise would be wasted in quarrels and contests.

The oldest of Tom's clerks—men who had served him for five or six months—had never descended into this mysterious basement, which Sephora alone had the right to visit. It was the agent's private retreat, where he met his inner self and his conscience; the cocoon from which he emerged transformed; a sort of comedian's box which, moreover, the boudoir, with a glare of light from the gas-burners falling on the marble, the furbelowed drapery of the toilet-table, and the singular comic performances in which J. Tom Levis was indulging at this moment, very much resembled just now. With one turn of the hand he pulled off his long frock coat, and flung it away; then one waistcoat, then another,—the variegated ones of a circus-performer. He next unwound the ten metres of white muslin which formed his cravat, the bands of flannel one above the other around his waist; and from this majestic and apoplectic rotundity, which was seen flying about Paris in the first and only cab known at that time, there emerged all at once, with an "*Ouf!*" of satisfaction, a little, lean, nervous man, not bigger than an unwound reel,—a frightful Paris rough, fifty years old, who, one would have said, had been saved from a fire or drawn from a lime-kiln, with the wrinkles, seams, and scars of one who had been scalded, yet with a young

and boyish, air like the old leaders of '48,—the real Tom Levis; that is to say, Narcissus Poitou, the son of a joiner in the Rue de l'Orillon.

Having grown up among the chips from his father's bench till he was ten years old, and from ten to fifteen having been brought up by the *Mutuelle* and in the street, that incomparable school in the open air, Narcissus in his earliest years felt a horror of the people and manual trades; while at the same time there was developed in him a consuming imagination, which the Parisian gutter, with all the heterogeneous matter it collects, fed better than a voyage across the ocean.

While quite a child, he made plans and business-projects. And later this castle-building prevented him from concentrating his powers and making them productive. He travelled, and took up a thousand trades,—a miner in Australia, a squatter in America, a comedian in Batavia, a bar-tender in Bruxelles. After having contracted debts on both sides of the water, and being stripped by creditors in the four corners of the universe, he established himself as a business-agent in London, where he lived quite a long time, and where he might have succeeded had it not been for his terrible, insatiable imagination, always seeking something new,—the imagination of a voluptuary ever anticipating the next pleasure, only to be thrown back on the dreary British poverty. This time he rolled very low, and was picked up at night in Hyde Park as he poached the swans in the pond. A few months of prison completed his disgust for free England; and, returning in a shipwrecked condition, he was stranded on the Parisian sidewalk which he started from. It was another fantastic caprice, joined to his instincts of a showman and comedian, which led him to

get himself naturalized as an Englishman in the very centre of Paris, which was easy for him on account of his knowledge of the manners, tongue, and Anglo-Saxon ways. This came to him at once, by instinct, in his first business undertaking, — in his first “great hit” as an agent.

“Whom shall I announce?” he was insolently asked by a tall rascal in livery.

Poitou looked so shabby and so sad in the vast ante-room, and trembled so lest he be sent away before he could be heard, that he felt the need of rising above all this by something abnormal and foreign.

“*Adh !* announce Sir Tom Levis,” he said.

And he immediately felt self-possessed under this name improvised on the spur of the moment, and, in this borrowed nationality, amused himself by perfecting peculiarities and eccentricities and, while watching his accent and bearing, very quickly corrected his exuberant dash, which enabled him to invent traps, while he was apparently seeking his words.

It was very singular, that, of the numberless combinations of his brain, — which was full of discoveries, — this, the least sought of all, succeeded the best.

He owed Sephora’s acquaintance to it. She was then keeping a kind of “family hotel” in the Champs Elysées, — a dainty lodging-house, three stories high, with pink curtains, and a little porch on the Avenue d’Antin, between two broad asphalt walks enlivened with verdure and flowers. The mistress of the house, who was always dressed, sat at a window on the first floor, and presented to the beholder her calm, divine profile bowed over some piece of work or her account-book. Within was a strangely foreign society — clowns, bookmakers, circus-

riders, horse-dealers, and all the Anglo-American Bohemia, —the worst of all, —the scum of mining-districts and gambling-towns. The female servants were recruited from the quadrilles at the Mabille, from which the violins could be plainly heard on summer evenings, mingled with the noise of family disputes, and the rattling of counters and louis ; for they played heavily after dinner.

If, perchance, some honest family from abroad, deceived by the deceitful *façade*, came to take up their quarters at Sephora's, the strange appearance of the guests, and the tone of their conversation, very quickly drove them away in horror before their trunks were hardly unpacked. Among all these adventurers and speculators, Master Poitou — or rather Tom Levis, the little tenant lodging under the eaves — very quickly obtained a situation by his gayety, his versatility, and his experience in every kind of business. He invested the servants' money, and through them gained the mistress's confidence. And how could he but have it with his good, open, smiling face, and that indefatigable life and spirit which made him a valuable guest at the *table d'hôte*, warming up a patron, baiting a trap for him, the moving spirit in bets and consummations? Cold and distant to every one, the beautiful hostess of the family was free only with Monsieur Tom. Often in the afternoon, when he went out or came in, he stopped in the little office of the hotel, which was very neat, and all mirrors and sparkle. Sephora told him her business-affairs, showed him her jewels and her books, consulted him about the day's bill of fare, or the care necessary to give a large, flowering, horn-shaped arum, drinking up the water from a Minton china pot. They laughed together over love-letters and proposals of every kind that she received ; for hers was a

beauty that sentiment did not alter. Being without passion, she preserved her *sang froid* everywhere and always, and treated love as a business. It is said that it is only the first lover who counts ; that of Sephora — the sexagenarian chosen by her father — froze her blood forever, and perverted love. She saw in it only money, and also intrigue, *ruses*, and trade ; this admirable creature having been born in the *bric-à-brac* shop, and only for the *bric-à-brac* shop. Gradually a tie was formed between her and Tom, — a friendship like that of an uncle to a ward. He advised and guided her, and always with a skill and fertility of imagination which charmed her balanced, methodical nature, in which Jewish fatalism was mingled with the heavy Flemish temperament. She had never planned or imagined any thing, living only in the present moment ; and Tom's brain — that piece of fireworks that was always lighted — could but dazzle her. What completed it was to hear her boarder say one evening, as he took his key from the desk, after talking barbarous French in the most comical manner, —

“And, you must know, I'm no Englishman at all.”

From that day she became enamoured ; or rather — for sentiments are of no value unless labelled — she went crazy over him, as a woman of the world is crazy about the comedian, whom, away from the footlights, paint, and his stage-dress, she alone knows such as he is, and not what he appears to others. Love always demands to be privileged. Then both came from the same Parisian gutter : it had soiled the hem of Sephora's petticoats, and Narcissus had rolled in it ; but they both preserved the stains of such contact, and their low tastes. The stamp of the faubourg, and the dissolute lines on the distorted face of the rough, which helped him in his mimicry, and

which sometimes lifted a corner of the mask from the face of the Englishman, Sephora showed in sudden expressions in the biblical lines of her face, and in the scornful, common laugh, which rang out from a mouth resembling that of Salomé. This singular love of the beauty and the beast increased as the woman entered more into the life of the showman, and into the confidence of his plots and monkey tricks, — from the invention of the cab to that of the multiple waistcoats, by the aid of which Tom Levis, not being able to grow tall, tried at least to appear majestic; and also as she associated herself to a life full of chance, excitement, bold projects, and dreams, and devoted to both grand and small affairs.

This monkey-man had so much power, that, after a ten-years' lawful home with him, he still amused and charmed her as at the first time they met. One would have been convinced of this at seeing her on this day lying back on the lounge of the little *salon*, rolling around convulsed with laughter, while saying with an ecstatic, admiring air, —

“Isn't he bright? isn't he bright?” while Tom, in colored tights and knitted hose, and reduced to his most sober, bald, angular, bony appearance, was frisking about in the maddest of jigs.

When both were weary, — she of laughing, and he of dancing the jig, — he threw himself on the lounge, brought his monkeyfied face close to that angelic head, and, blowing his exultant words into her face, said, —

“The Sprichts are done for! The Sprichts are put out of the way! I have found the way to make my strike.”

“Are you certain? Who is it?”

At the name he gave, Sephora made up a pretty, scornful little face.

"What ! that great canary ! But he has not a sou now. We have stripped, shaved, and shorn him, — he and his Lion of Illyria. There isn't that much of wool on his back."

"Don't run down the Lion of Illyria, my girl : the skin alone is worth two hundred millions," said Tom, recovering his usual coolness.

The woman's eyes glowed. He repeated, emphasizing every syllable, —

"Two hundred millions !"

Then coolly and clearly he explained the scheme to her. Christian II. must be made to accept the proposals of the Diet, and give up his rights to the crown for the large price that was offered him. Indeed, what was it ? A signature to be given — no more.

Christian of himself would have consented long ago ; but the influence around him — that of the queen in particular — prevented him from signing that renunciation. But he must come to it some day or other. There was no longer a sou in the house. They owed every one in Saint Mandé, — the butcher, the grain-dealer ; for, in spite of the poverty of the masters, there were still horses in the stable, and the house was fitted up and the table laid with every appearance of luxury, although there were serious privations in the background.

The royal linen, marked with the crown, was becoming full of holes in the press ; and they were not replacing it. The stables were empty ; the largest pieces of silver were pawned ; and the servants, of whom there were not enough, were often kept waiting for their wages for months. All these details Tom had from Lebeau, the *valet-de-chambre*, who also told him about the two hundred millions proposed by the Diet of Laybach, and the

scene which took place when the proposition was received.

Since the king knew that there were two hundred millions for him close at hand, obtainable by a penful of ink, he was no longer the same man : he neither laughed nor spoke, and retained this one fixed idea like a neuralgic spot on the same side of the forehead. He was surly as a bear, and gave heavy sighs without speaking a word. But nothing was changed in his household service. The secretary, *valet-de-chambre*, coachman, and footmen remained ; and there was the same costly luxury in furnishing and style. Frédérique, in her wounded pride, believing she could hide her distress by her *hauteur*, would never have permitted the king to be deprived of any thing. When he happened to take his meals at the Rue Herbillon, the table must be luxuriously set. What was wanting, however, and what she could not furnish, was pocket-money for the club, play, and young women. Evidently this would make the king yield. Some fine morning, after late hours spent at a game of *baccarat* and *bouillotte*, not being able to pay and unwilling to owe, — think of Christian of Illyria being published at the Royal Club ! — he would take his best pen, and with one stroke sign his abdication as a monarch. The thing would have already happened if old Rosen, secretly, and in spite of being forbidden by Frédérique, had not begun to pay his Majesty's debts again. So the plan was to make him exceed his small current debts, and draw him into real expenses, into various kinds of engagements, which would exceed the old duke's resources. This required considerable money to be advanced.

"But," said Tom Levis, "it is such a splendid opera-



tion, that funds will not be lacking. 'The best thing to do would be to speak to your father, and work it in the family. Only what bothers me is the mainspring, — the woman.'

"What woman?" asked Sephora, opening her innocent eyes very wide.

"The one who will put the halter round the king's neck. We must have some one who will steadily eat into his income, — a serious girl with a sound stomach, who will snatch at the big pieces at once."

"Amy Férat, perhaps."

"No, no! worn out, — a thousand times worn out; and, besides, not serious enough. She would feast and sing, and have a good time like young persons generally, but is not the woman to fritter away her little million a month quietly, without appearing to touch it, keeping people waiting for pay, and buying things at retail by the square centimetre, which is much dearer than to buy a piece of land in the Rue de la Paix."

"Oh! I see very well how the thing must be managed," said Sephora dreamily. "But who will do it?"

"Ah! that is it: who?"

And the smile they exchanged was equivalent to a compact.

"Go on with it, since you have begun."

"What! do you know?"

"Do I not see his game when he looks at you, and plants himself before your desk as soon as he thinks I have gone out? Besides, he makes no mystery of it, but tells his love to whomever will hear it. He has even written it down, and put his signature against it in the book at the club."

On learning the story of the bet, the quiet Sephora became roused.

“Ah, truly! Two thousand louis that he would win me, indeed! That is too much.” And, saying this, she rose, walked about a little to shake off her anger; then, returning to her husband, continued:—

“You know, Tom, for more than three months this great booby has been hanging round my chair. Well, listen: not even that.”

A grating sound was heard, as though a stout little claw were being snapped at by a tooth ready to bite.

She told the truth. Since the king had pursued her, he had not succeeded further than to touch the end of her fingers, to bite her pen-handles after her, and get intoxicated by the touch of her dress. Such a thing had never happened to this Prince Charming before, spoiled as he was by women, besieged by entreating smiles and perfumed letters. His pretty, curly head, which bore the impress of a crown, the heroic legend which the queen wisely proclaimed, and, above all, the bewildering perfume which surrounds worshipped beings, brought him real success in the faubourg. More than one young woman could have shown a *ouistiti* from the royal cage, wrapped up on a lounge in her aristocratic boudoir; and in the green-room, in general monarchical and conservative, it would set up a young lady to have the portrait of Christian II. in her album. This man, accustomed to find eyes, lips, and hearts come out to him, and to never cast a glance without seeing it thrill whomsoever it met, had been dancing attendance upon the calmest, coldest nature he had ever seen. She played the model cashier, counted, ciphered, and turned heavy pages, showing her sighing admirer only the velvety roundness of her profile, with the shadow of a smile rising at one corner, and reaching her eyelids.

His capricious Slavonian nature at first caused him to take pleasure in this struggle, and his self-love had part in it also. All the eyes of the Royal Club were directed towards him ; and it ended by becoming a true passion, fed by the void of his unoccupied existence, in which the flame burned without a check.

He came every day towards five o'clock, — the pleasantest part of the day in Paris, — the hour for calls, when the pleasure engagements for the evening are made ; and gradually all the young men from the club, who lunched at the agency and hovered around Sephora, respectfully yielded the place to him. This desertion, diminishing the sum of small current affairs, increased the lady's coldness ; and, as the Lion from Illyria brought nothing to her, she began to let Christian feel that he bored her, — that he monopolized rather too royally the corner of the railing she left open ; when all at once — the next day after her conversation with Tom — all this changed.

"Your Majesty was seen last evening at the Fantaisies?"

At this question, asked with an anxious, sad look, Christian II. felt deliciously moved.

"It is a fact. I was there."

"Not alone?"

"But" —

"Ah ! there are some fortunate women."

Immediately, as if to lessen the provocation of her words, she added, that for a long time she had been crazy to go to that little theatre "to see that Swedish dancer, you know." But her husband took her nowhere.

Christian proposed to take her.

"Oh ! you are too well known."

"But we should be out of sight, in the back part of a box."

They made a rendezvous for the next day, for Tom was to pass the evening out. What a delightful escapade ! Sephora in the front of the box, in an artistic, quiet toilet, was radiant with childlike joy at seeing this foreigner dance, who was now the celebrity in Paris, — a Swede, with a thin face and angular gestures, whose brilliant black eyes, filling the whole iris, like rat's eyes, contrasted with her fair hair ; and being dressed in black, as she flew about silently, she resembled a great, frightened bat.

"Oh, how I enjoy it ! how I enjoy it !" said Sephora.

And this king, a high liver, who sat motionless behind her, with a box of *bon-bons* on his knees, could not remember a more delightful sensation than the touch of her bare arm under the lace, and her sweet, fresh breath, as she turned her face to him. He drove her back to the Saint Lazare station, since she was going to the country, and in the carriage was carried away by impulse, and threw his arms around her, and clasped her to his heart.

"Oh !" said she sadly, "you will spoil all my pleasure."

The immense waiting-room on the ground-floor was deserted, and dimly lighted. Both were seated on one bench. Sephora, shivering, was wrapped up in Christian's ample fur. Here she was no longer afraid, and spoke softly into the king's ear. From time to time a clerk would go by swinging his lantern, or some troop of comedians living in the suburbs, and returning home after the theatre. Among them a mysterious couple, with arms around each other, were walking apart.

“How happy they are !” murmured Sephora. “No ties, no duties. Following the impulse of their hearts. All else is a mockery.”

She knew something about it, alas ! and suddenly, carried away as if by impulse, she related her sad life with a sincerity which touched him, telling of the snares and temptations in the streets of Paris for a girl whom her father's avarice made poor, and the gloomy story of her being sold at sixteen, and all being over with her life ; the four years passed with this old man to whom she was only a nurse ; and afterwards, not wishing to go back to father Leeman's shop, the necessity of having a guide and support which made her marry this Tom Levis, a moneyed man. She was a devoted wife, deprived herself of all pleasure, and buried herself alive in the country ; then put herself to work as his clerk, and did not get a thank you, or a favor from this ambitious man, who was full of his affairs, who at the least sign on her part of rebellion, or the least desire to enjoy life, brought up the past, for which she was not responsible.

“This past,” said she, rising, “which brought upon me the shameful outrage of your name on the book of the Royal Club.”

The bell for the departure of the cars brought this little theatrical effect to a close just at the right point. She moved away with her gliding step, the soft folds of her black dress following her motions, waved a farewell to Christian with her eyes and hand, and left him, amazed and motionless, overcome by what he had just heard. She knew then. But how? Oh, how angry he was with himself for his baseness and bragging ! He passed his night in writing and in asking pardon in French, sown with all the flowers of his national poetry, which compares

the well-beloved to the timid doves and the rosy fruit of the azarola.

It was a wonderful invention of Sephora, this reproach about the bet. It gave her full power over the king, and for a long time, and also explained her coldness, and almost hostile reception, and the profit she intended to make from it in the furtherance of her plans. Ought not a man to endure every thing from her to whom he has offered such an affront? Christian became the timid servant, docile under all her caprices, the titled *cicisbeo*, — known as such to all Paris; and, though the lady's beauty might be his excuse in the eyes of the world, it was not pleasant to have the husband's friendship and intimacy.

"My friend Christian II.," Tom Levis would say, drawing up his little figure. He once had a fancy to receive him at Courbevoie, an event which caused Spricht one of those jealous, angry fits which shortened the days of the illustrious dressmaker. The king went over the house and park; went on board the yacht; consented to have his photograph taken on the doorsteps between the host and hostess, who wished to perpetuate the memory of this never-to-be-forgotten day; and in the evening, while they were sending off, in honor of his Majesty, fire-works, whose rockets were reflected in the Seine, Sephora, leaning on his arm, said to him, as they walked along the hedges, which were rosy with the color of a Bengal light, —

"Oh, how I should love you if you were not a king!"

It was her first avowal, and very shrewd. All the women till now had adored him as a sovereign, for his glorious title and ancestry. This one really loved him for himself. "If you were not a king." But he was so

little of one, he would so willingly have sacrificed the fragment of dynastic purple which barely covered his shoulders !

Another time she explained herself still better. When he was disturbed at finding her pale and weeping, she answered his questions by saying, —

“I fear that soon we shall not be able to see each other any more.”

“Why not?”

“My husband has just declared that business was too dull for him to stay in France, and that he must close his store, and go elsewhere.”

“Would he take you?”

“Oh, I am only a check to his ambition ! He said to me, ‘Come, if you wish.’ And I must follow him. What would become of me all alone here?”

“Cruel woman, am I not here?”

She looked at him fixedly straight into his eyes.

“Yes, it is true : you love me. And I also love you. I could be yours without shame. But, no : it is impossible.”

“Impossible?” he asked breathlessly at the glimpse of paradise opened before him.

“You are too much above Sephora Levis, your Majesty.”

And he replied, with adorable fatuity, —

“But I will raise you to my position. I will make you a countess or a duchess. It is one of the rights left me ; and we will find a lovers’ nest somewhere in Paris, where I will establish you in a manner worthy your rank, and where we will live all alone, — only ourselves.

“Oh, that would be too beautiful !”

She became dreamy, and raised her tearful eyes, which

were as frank as those of a little girl ; then said quickly, —

“ But, no : you are a king. Some day, in the midst of my happiness, you would leave me.”

“ Never ! ”

“ And if you should be recalled ? ”

“ Where ? To Illyria ? All is over there forever. I lost last year one of those opportunities which do not come twice.”

“ Is it true ? ” she said, with a joy which was not feigned. “ Oh, if I were sure of it ! ”

There came to his lips to convince her a word which he did not speak, but which she understood plainly ; and, in the evening, Tom Levis, whom Sephora kept informed of all, declared solemnly that things had come to the right point ; that they must notify her father.

Charmed, like his daughter, by Tom Levis's imagination, contagious spirits, and inventive gabble, Leemans several times placed money in the operations of the agency. After having gained, he lost, following in this the chances of the game ; but when he had been “ taken in,” as he expressed it, two or three times, the good man stopped. He made no recriminations, nor became angry, knowing too well what business was, and detesting useless words ; only, when his son-in-law came to talk to him about joint stock for one of those marvellous castles in the air which his eloquence raised to the skies, the old *bric-à-brac* dealer smiled in his beard, with a movement of his lips, which signified very plainly, “ Ov-over : it is over ! ” and lowered his eyelids, which seemed to bring Tom's extravagances to reason, and to the level of practicable things. Tom knew this ; and, as he wisely insisted that this Illyrian affair should not go out of the family,



he sent Sephora to the *bric-à-brac* dealer, who, as he grew old, began to feel something like affection for his only child, with whom, besides, he felt as if he were living again.

Since the death of his wife, Leemans had given up his curiosity-store in the Rue de la Paix, contenting himself with his second-hand *bric-à-brac* shop.

It was there that Sephora visited him one morning early, to be sure of meeting him ; for the old man remained at home but little. Being immensely rich, and having retired from business at least in appearance, he continued to ransack Paris from morning till evening ; ran after the merchants, and followed sales, seeking the atmosphere and the contact of business ; and, above all, watching with marvellous acuteness the crowd of small traders, mechanics, dealers in pictures and trinkets, with whom he was associated, without acknowledging it for fear his fortune might be suspected.

Sephora, through caprice and a reminiscence of her youth, came on foot from the Rue Royale to the Rue Eginhard, following almost the same road which she used to take formerly from the store. It was not eight o'clock. The air was keen, and towards the Bastille there remained of the dawn an orange cloud, in which the gilded genius on the column appeared to bathe his wings. A crowd of pretty girls from the faubourg came from this direction, through the side streets, on their way to work. If Prince d'Axel had risen early enough to watch them come down, he would have been content this morning. Walking very fast in twos and threes, and chatting in a sprightly manner, they reached the swarming shops in the streets Saint Martin, Saint Denis, and Vieille du Temple, and a few elegant ones, the stores in the boulevards, farther off,

but opening later. It was not like the animation in the evening, when, their work being done, they return home, with their heads full of a day in Paris, laughing and frolicking, but often filled with regret for that luxury of which they had had a glimpse, which made the attic seem higher up, and the staircase darker.

But, if these young faces still showed traces of sleep, rest had beautified them with a freshness which was completed by their carefully dressed hair, with an end of ribbon fastened in its braids and under their chin, and by their black dresses, which were hastily brushed before daylight. Here and there glittered a false jewel at the tip of an ear rosy with the cold, a bright-red comb, the gilt ornaments of a buckle at the waist, and the white line of a newspaper folded in the pocket of a waterproof. And how full of courage they hurried along, dressed in light cloaks and scant skirts, walking unsteadily on heels too high for ease, and which constant running about had worn on one side ! All seemed to be born to flirt. They had a peculiar way of walking with their foreheads up in the air, and with their eyes looking straight ahead, as if curious to know what would happen on the day just begun. Their natures were on the *qui vive* for a change of fortune, as their Parisian type, which is no type at all, is capable of any transformation.

Sephora was not sentimental, and never saw any thing beyond material things and the present hour ; yet this confused tramping, and hasty rustling of skirts, amused her. She saw her own youth in all these pretty faces, under this morning sky, in this old neighborhood which is so curious, and where each street has on the corner-signs the name of noted merchants, just as it was fifteen years ago.

In passing under the black arch which serves as an entrance to the Rue Eginhard, in the direction of the Rue Saint Paul, she brushed by the long robe of the rabbi who was going to the neighboring synagogue ; and, two steps farther off, the rat-catcher with his pole and board from which are suspended the sleek bodies,—a type of ancient Paris which one only sees in this medley of mouldy houses, where all the rats in the town make their head-quarters. Farther on was a coachman — whom, when she was a shop-girl, she used to see going to market — moving heavily in his stout boots, not much used to walking, and holding in his hand with precious care, and upright as a communicant's taper, the whip, which is the coachman's sword, the insignia of his rank, and which never leaves him. At the door of two or three stores which filled the whole street, and from which they were removing the shutters, she saw the same bundles of rags, and heard the same Hebraic and Tudesque jargon ; and when, after having crossed the low porch of her father's house, the little court, and the four steps leading to the shop, she pulled the string of the cracked latch, it seemed to her that there were fifteen years less on her shoulders, — fifteen years which hardly weighed on them.

As in those days, Darnet came to the door. She was a robust, Auvergnat woman, whose shining, florid face had heavy shadows around the eyes and mouth. Her dotted shawl was drawn closely around her, and the head-dress bordered with white seemed to have the mourning hue of a charcoal-shop. Her *rôle* in the house was apparent by the very manner in which she opened the door to Sephora, and the smiles on the puckered lips of the two women.

"Is father in?"

"Yes, Madame, in the shop. I will call him."

"It is not necessary. I know where that is."

She passed through the anteroom and the *salon*, and in three strides crossed the garden, a black well between tall walls, where grew several trees, its narrow paths encumbered by numberless pieces of rubbish, old iron, lead, old-fashioned banisters, and strong chains whose blackened and oxidized metal blended with the sad box-plants, and the greenish tinge of the old fountain in the garden. On one side was a shed overflowing with *débris*, skeletons of broken-down furniture of every age, with heaps of tapestry rolled up in the corners; on the other was a shop with ground-glass windows for protection from curious eyes in neighboring stories.

A mass of wealth rose to the ceiling in apparent disorder, and was known for its true value only by the old man. There were lanterns, chandeliers, torch-holders, screens, censers, and antique and foreign bronzes. In the background were two blacksmith's furnaces, a joiner's bench, and that of a locksmith. It was here that the *bric-à-brac* dealer brushed up, copied, and rejuvenated old models with wonderful skill, and the patience of a monk. Formerly there was a great deal of noise from morning until night, five or six workmen surrounding the master. Nothing was now heard but the clicking of a hammer on fine metal, and the scratching of a file. The single lamp lighted in the evening showed that there was life in the shop.

When his daughter entered, the old Leemans—in a large leather apron, with the sleeves of his shirt turned up on fair and hairy arms, which looked as if bits of copper from the bench had clung to them—was about to forge in a vice a Louis XIII. chandelier, a model of which he had before his eyes. At the sound of the door he raised his ruddy face, which was lost in abundant red hair

and beard, streaked with white, and knitted his uneven eyebrows, from which his eyes looked out as from the shaggy hair of a griffin.

"G'morning, pa!" said Sephora, pretending not to see the embarrassed movement of the good man, who was trying to hide the torch he held; for he did not like to be disturbed or seen at his work.

"Is it you, little one?" he said, rubbing his old face against the two delicate cheeks. "What has happened?" he asked, pushing her into the garden. "Why have you risen so early?"

"I have something of great importance to tell you."

"Come!"

He pulled her towards the house.

"Oh! but, you know, I don't wish Darnet to be present."

"Good, good!" said the old man, smiling in his thick-et of hair; and, as he entered, he called to the servant, who was about to polish the glass of a Venetian mirror, and who was always wiping and scrubbing, with a brow as polished as the floor, —

"Darnet, you will go into the garden, and see if you find me there."<sup>1</sup>

And the tone with which this was said proved that the old pacha had not yet abdicated in favor of the favorite slave. Father and daughter remained alone in the little, neat *bourgeois salon*, where the furniture was in white slip-coverings, and the little wool mats in front of the chairs contrasted with the topsy-turvy mass of dusty treasures in the shed and shop. Like those skilful cooks who only like simple dishes, Leemans, who was so expert and curious in things of art, did not have a vestige of them in his

<sup>1</sup> TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. — A French idiomatic saying, meaning that one's company is not wanted.

own house, and showed in this the merchant that he was, by estimating, trading, and exchanging without passion or regret. He was not like those artists in trinkets, who, before giving up a rare object, feel anxious as to the style in which the amateur may surround it and set it off. Nothing hung on the walls but his large, life-size portrait, signed "Wattelet," representing him at work among his *bric-à-brac* collection. It was his very self, — a little less white, but unchanged, just as thin and bent, with a face half-man, half-dog, a flat red beard, and long, oily hair, showing nothing of his face but a nose reddened by chronic inflammation, which made the sober tea-drinker look like a drunkard. The picture was the only characteristic mark of the room, with a prayer-book placed edgewise on the mantel-piece. Leemans owed some successful business to this book. In this he was distinguished from his rivals, — the old miscreant of a Schwalbach, Mother Esai, and the rest, with their Ghetto descent; for he was a Christian, married through love to a Jewess, but still remaining a Christian, even a Catholic. This served him with his noble patronesses. He heard mass in the oratories of these ladies, — the Countess Mallet, and the elder of the Sismondos, — and also appeared on Sundays at Saint Thomas d'Aquin and at Sainte Clotilde, where his best patrons went; while through his wife he visited the houses of the great Israelite traders. As he grew older, this religious grimace became a wrinkle and a habit. Often in the morning, when he went to his place of business, he entered Saint Paul to "*take*" — as he said seriously, — "*a little bit of mass*," having noticed that every thing succeeded better on those days.

"Well!" he said, looking slyly at his daughter.

"A grand affair, pa."

She drew from her pocket a roll of bills and drafts bearing Christian's signature.

"This must be cashed. Will you do it?"

At a mere glance at the handwriting, the old man made a grimace, that puckered his face till it disappeared almost entirely under his bushy hair, after the manner of a hedgehog that bristles up in defence.

"Illyrian paper! Thanks: I know what that is. Your husband must be a fool to send you on such an errand. Come, really, have you any thing to do with it?"

Without allowing herself to be disturbed at this reception, which she expected, she said, —

"Listen!" And in her deliberate manner she told him in detail all about the great scheme, bringing, as proofs to support her assertions, the number of the "Quernaro" where the sitting of the Diet was reported, and the letters from Lebeau keeping them acquainted with the situation. The king, who was madly in love, wished to find a place in which to enjoy his new happiness. A superb hotel in Messina Avenue, a house thoroughly fitted up, and carriages, were what he wished for the lady; and he was ready to sign as many notes as was necessary, and at whatever rate was asked. Leemans now opened both ears, made objections, asked questions, and ferreted out the whole affair, which had been so wisely planned.

"For how long a time are the notes?"

"For three months."

"Then in three months?"

"In three months" —

She made a movement as if she were fastening a noose, and puckered up her quiet lips.

"And the interest?"

"As large as you wish. The heavier the notes, the

better ; and he must not have other resources than he will obtain by signing his renunciation."

"And when he has signed it?"

"That concerns the woman. She has a gentleman of two hundred millions to nibble."

"And suppose she keeps every thing for herself. It is necessary to have a woman one is deusedly sure of."

"We are sure of her."

"Who is it?"

"You do not know her," said Sephora, without moving a muscle, and putting all the papers back into her little lawyer's bag.

"Leave that here," said the old man eagerly. "It is a great deal of money, you must know, — considerable of a sum to expend ; but I will talk about it to Pichery."

"Take care, p'pa. You must not let in too many persons. There are already ourselves, Lebeau, and you. If you go looking for others" —

"Only Pichery. You must remember I could not do it all alone. It is a great deal of money, — a great deal of money."

Sephora answered coldly, —

"Oh, it will need a great deal more !"

There was a silence. The old man was reflecting, and keeping his thoughts to himself.

"Well," said he, "I will do it ; but on one condition. That house in Messina Avenue will have to be furnished in swell style. And it is I who will furnish the ornaments."

In the bargaining of the usurer, the *bric-à-brac* dealer was showing his paw. Sephora burst into a laugh, which displayed her thirty-two teeth.

"Oh, the old rubbish ! the old rubbish !" she said,



using a word that the atmosphere of the shop suddenly brought back to her mind, and which clashed with her distinguished toilet and bearing. "Well, it is agreed, pa : you will furnish the ornaments. But nothing from mamma's collection, remember."

Under the hypocritical label, "Madame Leemans's Collection," the *bric-à-brac* dealer had grouped a lot of castaway, unsalable articles, which he disposed of at a magnificent sale, thanks to his sentimental grimace, taking from the precious lot of the relics of his dear departed wife only what purchasers would pay for by their weight in gold.

"You understand me, old fellow,—no tricks, no frauds. The lady knows the worth of the articles."

"You think she does?" said the old dog from under his mustache.

"As well as you and I."

"But, pray"—He approached his rough face to her pretty little one ; and on both the *bric-à-brac* business was written,—on the old man's parchment-skin, and on the downy rose-leaves of his daughter.

"But, pray, who is this woman? You can certainly tell me, now that I am in the affair."

"It is"—

She stops a moment, fastens the broad strings of her hat under her delicate oval face, looks into the mirror with the satisfied gaze of a pretty woman and with a new feeling of pride, and says gravely,—

"It is the Countess of Spalato."

## CHAPTER IX.

## AT THE ACADEMY.

THE classical palace which sleeps under its cupola at the end of the Bridge of Arts, at the entrance of studious Paris, wore this morning an air of unusual life, which extended to the quay. In spite of the rain, — a June rain coming down in sharp showers, — the crowd thronged round the steps of the great gate, and wound along the fences and walls, and flowed under the arch in the Rue de la Seine, in a line as at the entrance to a theatre, — a well-gloved, well-dressed, well-behaved crowd, who stood shivering in patience, knowing they would enter, as the little cards of different colors — which were bright and conspicuous in the rain, and with which each person was provided — fully proved. The carriages filed down in a regular line through the deserted Quai de la Monnaie, — the most luxurious equipages that Paris contained, — bearing on their panels the arms and grand escutcheons of France and all Europe, even royal devices, with coachmen in dainty and showy livery, adorned with gold braid, protected democratically by umbrellas and waterproofs, and with wigs dressed in the form of a hammer. All formed a picture like an immense panoramic d'Hosier unrolled along the Seine. When a sunbeam pierced the clouds, — a gleam of the Parisian sun, which has the grace of a smile on a serious face, — there was a glitter like stars in the reflections from the wet harnesses, guards' helmets,

the lantern of the dome, and the iron fountains at the entrance, which were usually dusty and tarnished, but were now of a beautiful black, having been washed by the rain.

From time to time, on grand reception days, the old Institute has this unusual and interesting appearance of afternoon life. But on this morning there was no reception. The season was too far advanced ; and the recipients, who were as coquettish as comedians, would never consent to make their *début*, the Paris prize being already contended for, the *salon* closed, and trunks packed for a journey. There was simply a distribution of academical prizes, — a very quiet ceremony, which usually attracts only the families of those who win them. The cause of this unusual show of wealth — this aristocratic dust — at the door of the Institute is, that, among the works crowned, is “The Memorial of the Siege of Ragusa,” by Prince de Rosen, and by which the monarchical *coterie* have profited to organize a manifestation against the government under the protection of its police-officers. By an extraordinary chance, or the fact of these intrigues which mysteriously hollow out mole-paths in the official or academical grounds, the regular secretary being ill, the report on the crowned works was to be read by the noble Duke de Fitz Roy ; and it was known, that, being a Legitimist to the marrow of his bones, he would emphasize and show off the most ardent passages of Herbert’s book, — that beautiful historical pamphlet, on which were centred all the devotion and all the fervor of the party. In short, it was one of those malicious protestations which the Academy dared attempt even under the Empire, and which the amiable indulgence of the Republic authorized.

It is noon, and the twelve strokes from the old clock

cause a noise and stir in the crowd. The doors are open, and people advance slowly and methodically towards the entrance of the place and the Rue Mazarine ; while the emblazoned carriages, turning round in the court, set down their owners — the privileged having cards — under the portico, where, among ushers with badges, the affable chief secretary, in silver lace, moves around smiling and eager as the good major-domo in the palace of the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood, when, after a sleep of a hundred years, the princess awakes on her bed of state. The doors close ; the ready footmen in long surtouts jump down from their boxes ; and there are greetings and courtesies of ladies in sweeping trains ; and smiles and whisperings among *habitués* are exchanged and lost in a rustle of silk on the carpeted stairs leading to the reserved seats or in the narrow, sloping passage-way, worn by the footfalls of centuries, which leads to the interior of the palace.

The hall fills in the form of an amphitheatre on the side reserved for the public. The benches are blackened one after the other as far as the upper tier, where the last rows of people, who are standing, are outlined against the oval windows. There is not an empty place : the room is filled with a sea of faces on which falls the dim light of a church or museum, made colder still by the reflection from the smooth and yellow stucco on the walls and the marble of the grand meditative statues, — Descartes, Bossuet, Massillon, — the glory of the great century congealed in motionless attitudes.

In front of the overflowing semicircle, a few unoccupied seats, and a little green table with the traditional glass of water, await the Academy and its officers, who will enter presently through those high doors surmounted by a

gilded and tomb-like inscription, — “Letters, Sciences, Arts.”

All this is antique, cold, and ordinary, and contrasts with the spring toilets, which give the hall the appearance of a flower-bed, — toilets in light colors, of pale, dead tints, downy gray, and the rosy hues of the dawn, cut in the modern close-fitting fashion, with fringes of sparkling jet and steel ; and airy head-dresses, a bewildering mass of mimosas and lace, with bright-hued tropical birds among knots of velvet and sun-colored sprays of straw ; and, in addition, the constant fluttering of large fans, whose delicate odors cause the eagle of Meaux to blink his great eyes.

Bear in mind, it is no reason because one belongs to the party of Old France that one should be musty, and dress frightfully. All those in Paris who may be considered exclusive, well-born, and right-minded, make rendezvous here, smile at each other, and make little masonic signs. Here is seen the flower of the clubs, the cream of the faubourg, — a society which is not demonstrative nor very social, and which one never sees at rehearsals, but only at the opera or the Conservatory on certain days ; a conservative, fastidious society, which drapes the windows of its *salons* to shut out the light and noise of the street, and is only heard of from time to time through death, or a trial for divorce, or the eccentric adventure of one of its members, who is a hero of the “Persil” and “La Gomme.” Among them were several noble Illyrian families, who followed their sovereigns into exile, — fine types of men and women, but rather too conspicuous and foreign in this refined society. Then grouped at certain prominent points were the members of the academical *salons*, who, a long time in advance, prepare

for the elections, influence the votes, and whose presence is worth more to a candidate than his weight in genius. Famous gamblers of the Empire insinuate themselves among these "old leaders," on whom they formerly exhausted their *parvenu* irony; and, select as the assembly was, a few hangers-on of stage-boxes, celebrated for their adherence to the monarchy, slipped in in simple dress with two or three fashionable actresses, whose faces were known by all Paris, and who were the more commonplace and conspicuous because other women of every class tried to copy them.

And then there were journalists and reporters of foreign papers, armed with every convenience in writing-materials, and equipped from head to foot as for a journey to the centre of Africa.

In the little reserved circle at the foot of the steps is seen the Princess de Rosen, the wife of the winner of the prize, who is charming in a greenish-blue toilet of India cashmere and moire antique, and looks triumphant and beaming under her frizzly flaxen hair. Near her is a stout man with a common face, Father Sauvadon, who is very proud at being allowed to accompany his niece, but who, in his ignorant zeal and desire to do honor to the solemn ceremony, has gotten himself up in evening dress. This makes him very uncomfortable; for he feels as stiff in his white cravat as if he had a yoke around his neck. He watches all the new-comers, hoping to find some one who will keep him company in his style of dress; but there is no one.

From this dazzling mass of color and bright faces there soon arises a very loud murmur of voices, rhythmical but distinct, which starts a magnetic current from one end of the hall to the other. The faintest laugh

ripples out, and becomes contagious ; and the slightest recognition, the silent motion of hands held out ready to applaud in advance, is perceived from the top to the bottom of the row of seats. It is the high state of excitement and the good-natured curiosity one sees at a fine rehearsal which is to be a success ; and when from time to time celebrities take their place, the rustling of this crowd accompanies them, and the buzz of curiosity and admiration dies away only when they have passed. Do you see up there above Sully those two women who have just entered accompanied by a child, and who occupy the whole front of a box ? They are the Queen of Illyria and the Queen of Palermo. The two cousins — holding themselves proudly erect, and dressed alike in mauve faille, with vests of ancient embroidery, and the same sweeping plumes curling around turban hats on the fair hair of one and the dark hair of the other — form a charming contrast of two noble types that are totally unlike.

Frédérique has grown pale, and her sweet smile has become sad and careworn ; while the face of her brunette cousin bears the mark of anxiety and the hardships of exile. Between them little Count Zara's fair curls are seen tossing about, his hair brushed back from a face that is held more erect, and that becomes more vigorous every day ; while the expression of his eyes and mouth shows more confidence, — a true off-shoot of the king beginning to bloom. The old Duke de Rosen occupied the back of the box with another person, — not Christian II., who has escaped a certain ovation, but a tall youth with thick, bushy hair, — an unknown person, whose name will not be once pronounced during the ceremony, and yet should be in every mouth ; for it is in his honor that

this *fête* is given. It is he who has caused this glorious requiem of the monarchy, attended by the last representatives of nobility in France, and the royal families who took refuge in Paris: for they are all there,—the exiled and the dethroned,—come to do honor to their cousin Christian; and it has been no small affair to place these crowned heads according to rank. Nowhere are questions of precedence more difficult to solve than in exile, where vanity leads to imbibited feeling, and susceptibility becomes inflamed into real wounds.

In the Descartes Gallery,—all the galleries bear the name of the statue above them,—the King of Westphalia maintains a haughty attitude, which renders still more striking the fixed gaze of his eyes, which look, but do not see. From time to time he smiles in one direction, and bows in another, constantly striving to conceal an incurable blindness; and his daughter—that tall, slender person, who seems to bow her head under the weight of the golden tresses whose shade she has always concealed from her father—aids him in this with the utmost devotion. The blind king likes brunettes only. “If you had been a blonde,” he would sometimes say, while caressing the princess’s hair, “I believe that I should have loved you less.” They were a charming couple, travelling the path of exile with the same dignity and quiet pride which would distinguish their bearing in a walk in the royal parks.

When Queen Frédérique has hours of discouragement, she thinks of this infirm man, led by this innocent girl, and takes comfort in their pure and charming example.

Farther on, under a glaring satin turban, we see the face of the stout Queen of Galicia, who, with her heavy cheeks and rough complexion, resembles a thick-skinned



red orange. She cuts a great dash, puffs, and fans herself, and laughs and talks with a woman who has a white lace mantilla on her head, who is still young, and has a sad, good face, marked from her reddened eyelids to her pale mouth by a furrow where tears have fallen. It is the Duchess of Palma, — an excellent creature, poorly fitted for the shocks and terror caused her by the adventurous monarch of the highway to whom her life is linked. He, too, is there, the great devil; and, in familiar proximity between the faces of the two women, one sees his glistening black beard, and his face, which is that of an old beau, bronzed by the last expedition, which was as costly and disastrous as the preceding. He has played the king; has had a court, *fêtes*, women, a *Te Deum*; and has made triumphant entrances over a route strewn with flowers. He has flourished about, made laws, danced, furnished food for ink and powder, shed blood, and sown hatred; and having lost the battle, and set the example of each save himself who can, he comes to recuperate in France, and find new recruits to put in danger, new millions to sink. He wears a costume appropriate for travel and adventure, — a frock-coat, fitting close to his figure, and ornamented with buttons and frogs, which give him the appearance of a gypsy. Noisy young people are stirring about, and talking in loud voices in this box, with all the freedom of a court of Queen Pomare; and the national language, rude and rough like small pieces of shot, bounds from one to the other, accompanied by familiarities of manner and speech, with frequent *thee*-ing and *thou*-ing, the secret of which is whispered about among the company in the hall.

It is very strange that, on a day when good places are

so rare that princes of the blood are seen in the amphitheatre, a little box — the Bossuet box — is empty. Every one asks who is to come into it ; what great dignity, and what sovereign stopping at Paris, is so long in appearing, and will let the exercises begin without him. Now the old clock strikes one ; and a quick, sharp shout is heard outside, “ Carry — arms ! ” and, at the automatic clicking of shifted guns, Letters, Sciences, and Arts make their appearance through the lofty doors that are thrown wide open.

What is very remarkable among these illustrious people, who are all alert and eager, — preserved, it may be said, by a principle, the power of tradition, — is, that the oldest affect a youthful manner and sprightliness, while the youngest try to appear the more grave and serious the less gray their hair. The general aspect lacks grandeur, with the stiff, modern style of dressing the hair, black costumes, and frock-coats. The wig of Boileau, or of Racan, whose large greyhound ate his addresses, would have had more power and a more dignified presence in such a place. But there was something of the picturesque in two or three frock-coats, whose wearers were seated high up before the table and the glass of *cau sucrée* ; and one of them pronounces the consecrated words, “ The meeting has begun.” But he says it in vain : no one believes it, and he does not himself. He knows very well that the real meeting is not this report about the Montyon prizes, which one of the most fluent in the assembly delivers, and modulates in sing-song style.

A model of an academical address, written in academical style, with such phrases “ as a little,” “ as it were ; ” which obliges the thought to continually retrace its

steps, like a penitent who has forgotten sins at confession; a style ornamented with rhetorical figures, redundancies, and fine flourishes of the pen like those of a writing-master, and which run between the phrases to conceal and round out the void; a style which needs to be learned, and which every one here puts on with his coat with green palm-leaves. Under other circumstances the ordinary public frequenting the place would have gone into ecstasies at this homily; and you would have seen it stamp and neigh with delight at these flowery phrases, whose climax they might have divined. But to-day one is hurried, and has not come for this little literary entertainment. Note with what an air of scornful *ennui* the aristocratic assembly listens to this enunciation of humble devotions; of fidelity under every trial; of secluded, monotonous, drudging lives, which pass along on the pages of this obsolete, minute phraseology as the actors moved in the tiled, fireless rooms of their provincial homes. Plebeian names, shabby gowns, old blue frocks, worn by sun and rain, from remote villages, where for a moment one has a glimpse of the pointed steeple and little low walls cemented with manure, are all ill at ease, and shrink from being called from such a distance and brought into this fine society in the cold light of the Institute, which is as unmerciful as a photographic machine. The noble society is astonished that there are so many worthy people among the common classes. Another, and still another! They haven't ceased, then, to suffer, and to be devoted and heroic. The club-men declare this intolerable. Colette de Rosen smells of her vinaigrette: all these old men, all these poor people they are talking about, to her mind suggest an ant-hill. Their faces and the very air indicate *ennui*.

The reader begins to understand that he wearies them, and hurries through the list.

Ah ! poor Marie Chalaye d'Ambérieux-les-Combes ! thou whom the people of the country call a saint, who for fifty years hast taken care of thy old paralytic aunt, hast endowed eighteen little cousins, wiping their noses and putting them to bed ! and you, worthy Abbé Bouril-lou, pastor of Saint Maximin-le-Haut ! when you went through bitter weather to carry aid and consolation to the cheese-makers in the mountain, — you did not suspect that the Institute of France, after crowning your efforts with a public reward, would feel ashamed of you, and scorn you ; and that your names, rattled off and stumbled over, could with difficulty be heard amid the inattention, and the buzzing of impatient or ironical conversation. The end of the address is a rout. Like a fugitive who throws away knapsack and arms in order to run faster, the speaker skips over passages relating to heroic deeds and angelic self-denial without the least remorse ; for he knows that the next day's papers will reproduce his address in full, and that not one of those pretty flowery sentences will be lost. But here it is at an end at last, with much applause and sighs of relief. The unhappy man sits down, wipes his brow, and receives the congratulations of two or three colleagues, — the last ones to preserve the purity of the academical style. Then there are five minutes' intermission, and a general coughing among the people in the hall, who stir about and stretch themselves. Suddenly there is a perfect silence. Another green coat has just arisen.

It is the noble Fitz Roy ; and all have an opportunity to admire him while he arranges his bundle of papers on the little table. He is slender, bent, and feeble, with

narrow shoulders, and stiff in his movements ; for he is all elbows, and his arms are too long, and he seems seventy, although but fifty, years old. On his worn-out, badly built body is a very little head with irregular features, of deathly pallor, between thin whiskers, and a few tufts of hair like a bird. Do you remember Montefeltro in "Lucrezia Borgia," who, feeling ashamed to live, drank Pope Alexander's poison, and tottered to the back of the stage utterly broken down in mind and body? The noble Fitz Roy represented this person very well. Not that he had drunk any thing, the poor man, — neither the Borgia's poison nor any thing else ; but he is the heir of an awfully ancient family, which has never crossed its blood, the off-shoot of an exhausted plant too old to make a *mesalliance*. The green of the palm-leaves makes him look still whiter, and still more like a sick monkey. Uncle Sauvadon, however, thinks he is divine. "Such a beautiful name, sir !" The women think him distinguished. A Fitz Roy ! It was the influence of this name, and this long genealogy in which fools and flat feet certainly were not wanting, which — much more than his poorly compiled historical studies, the first volume of which alone showed merit — gained him admission to the Academy. It is true some one else wrote it for him ; and if the noble Fitz Roy could see up there in Queen Frédérique's box the sound, brilliant head from which his best work came, perhaps he would not pick up the sheets of his address with that air of supreme and disdainful surliness, and he would not begin his reading by casting that haughty, sweeping glance over the heads of all, apparently seeing nothing. In the first place, he skilfully and lightly skims through the smaller works which the Acad-

emy has just crowned ; and to show how much beneath him is this task, and how little it interests him, he cuts at will the names and titles of the books ; for people must be amused. He finally comes to the Roblot prize, intended for the finest historical work published during the last five years.

“This prize, gentlemen, you know, has been awarded to Prince Herbert de Rosen for his magnificent ‘Memorial of the Siege of Ragusa.’”

A formidable burst of applause greeted these simple words sent forth in a ringing voice ; and, with the gesture of a good sower of seed, the noble Fitz Roy lets this first burst of enthusiasm subside, then, seeking an opposite effect, which is apparently unstudied but sure, resumes slowly and deliberately : “Gentlemen” — Then he stops, casts a look over the crowd waiting breathlessly, which is his, and which he holds in his hand, and seems to say, “*Hein !* if I did not choose to speak any more now, who would be deceived ? ”

It is he who is deceived ; for, when he prepares to continue, no one listens to him.

A door has closed above in the box which till now has been empty ; and a woman has entered, and seated herself without embarrassment, but immediately attracts attention. The dark toilet, designed by the great *modiste*, and ornamented with the peacock’s-eye pattern of embroidery, and a hat edged with a fall of gold lace, are charmingly becoming to the supple figure and the pale-rose tints of the oval face of this Esther sure of her Ahasuerus. The name is whispered around. All Paris knows her, and for three months nothing else has been talked about but her amours and luxurious style. The splendors of her hotel in the Avenue Messina bring to

mind the finest establishment in the time of the Empire.

The newspapers have given the details of this society scandal, the height of her stables, the cost of the paintings in her dining-room, the number of her carriages, and the disappearance of her husband, who, more honest than another celebrated Menelaus, did not wish to survive his dishonor, and went abroad to grieve as a deceived husband of the great century. It is only the lover's name that is left in blank. At the theatre the lady is always alone in the first row of the proscenium-boxes, escorted by a pair of delicate mustaches faintly seen in the dim light. At the races and in the Bois she is also alone, the empty place beside her in the carriage being filled by a very large bouquet, and having on its panels, around a mysterious coat-of-arms, the simple motto, newly painted, — *Mon droit, mon roy*, — which her lover has just given her with the title of countess.

This time the favorite is consecrated. Having placed her here on such a day among the seats of honor reserved for royalty, and given her for an escort Wattelet, Christian's liegeman, and Prince d'Axel, who is always ready when there is any compromising folly, is marking her publicly with the arms of Illyria. And yet her presence excites no feeling of indignation. There are all kinds of immunities for kings, whose pleasures are as sacred as their persons, especially in this aristocratic world where the tradition has been preserved of the mistresses of Louis XIV. or Louis XV. entering the queen's carriage, or supplanting her at the hunt.

Minxes like Colette de Rosen put on prudish airs, and wonder that the Institute receives such creatures. But be sure that each one of these ladies must have at

home a pretty little *ouistiti* dying of consumption. In reality the impression is excellent. The clubs say, "Very swell;" and the journalists, "It is bold." They smile good-naturedly; and the immortals themselves look complacently through their lorgnette at the adorable girl who leans over the edge of her box without affectation, having in her velvety eyes only that intentional fixed look of women besieged by the attention of lorgnettes.

People turn to the Queen of Illyria to see how she takes it. Oh, very well! Not a feature of her face, not a feather on her hat, has moved. Never mingling in the entertainments of the day, Frédérique cannot be acquainted with this woman. She has never seen her, and only glances at her at first as one well-dressed woman looks at another. "Who is it?" she asks the Queen of Palermo, who quickly answers, "I do not know." But, in a neighboring box, a name spoken very loud, and repeated several times, strikes her to the heart: "Spalato, — the Countess of Spalato."

For several months this name of Spalato has haunted her like a bad dream. She knows that it is borne by a new mistress of Christian, who only remembers that he was a king to bestow one of the greatest titles of the absent country on the creature of his pleasure. That acquainted her with his treachery among a thousand other things; but this fills the measure to overflowing. There, opposite her and the royal child, was this woman raised to the rank of a queen. What an outrage! And, although Frédérique is unaware of it, the serious, delicate beauty of the creature makes her feel it more keenly. Defiance is manifest in those beautiful eyes, the brow is boldly insolent, and the radiant expression of the mouth braves her. Then a thousand thoughts torture her mind,



—their great privations ; the daily humiliations. Even yesterday it was the carriage-maker who shouted under her windows, and whom Rosen paid ; for it had come to that. Where does Christian get the money that he gives to this woman ? Since the fraud in regard to the false stones, she knows what he is capable of ; and something tells her that this Spalato will be the dishonor of the king and of the race. For a moment, a second, the temptation passes over this violent nature to rise and leave, taking her child with her, and rush from this infamous neighbor and degrading rival : but she remembers that she is a queen, a woman, and the daughter of a king, and that Zara will be a king also ; and she does not wish to give their enemies the joy of such a scandal. A dignity higher than her dignity as a wife, and which in despair she has made the proud rule of her life, constrains her to maintain her rank here in public, as in the privacy of her desecrated home. O cruel destiny of the queens one envies ! The effort that she makes is so violent, that tears are about to fall from her eyes as the calm water of a pond leaps up under the stroke of an oar. That no one may see her, she quickly siezes her lorgnette, and looks obstinately and fixedly through the moist glasses at the gilded inscription above the head of the orator, — “ Letters, Sciences, Arts,” — which is magnified by her tears.

The noble Fitz Roy continues his reading. As colorless as a prison-coat was the pompous eulogy of the “ Memorial,” this book of eloquent history of cruel deeds written by the young Prince Herbert de Rosen, “ who uses the pen as he does the sword ;” a eulogy more than all of the hero who inspired it, “ this chivalrous Christian II., in whom are united the grace, nobility, strength, and the charming graciousness to be found only on the throne.” (Applause and cries of delight.)

It is a kind public decidedly quick to feel, and easily kindled, grasping at once and applying the most fleeting allusions. Sometimes in the middle of these cottony periods there was a true, striking-note,—a quotation from the “Memorial,” for which the queen furnished all the documents, everywhere substituting the king’s name for her own, and keeping in the background for his benefit. O God of justice ! this was how he rewarded her. The crowd bows at the passages relating deeds of confident, reckless bravery, and heroic acts very simply accomplished, framed by the writer in a prose full of imagery, from which they stand out like epic narratives of ancient times ; and, upon the enthusiastic reception accorded these references, the noble Fitz Roy, who is not a fool, renounces his literature, and contents himself with turning over the book to the finest parts. It is so exhilarating, that the audience felt as if buoyed on wings in this narrow, classical building, whose walls seem to expand, while a fresh breeze from without enters the uplifted cupola. People breathe freely, and fans no longer move in harmony with their restlessness. No : all are on their feet. Every head is raised to Frédérique’s box. They applaud and salute the conquered but glorious monarchy in the wife and son of Christian II., the last king and last chevalier.

Little Zara, whom noise and bravos excite as they do all children, applauds innocently, brushing away his fair curls with his little gloved hands ; while the queen draws back a little, being overpowered by this contagious enthusiasm, and tasting the momentary joy and illusion that it gives. Thus she has succeeded in surrounding with an aureole this phantom of a king behind which she conceals herself, and gilding with new brightness this crown of

Illyria which her son must wear some day, — a brightness with which one could never traffic. Then what should matter exile, betrayal, want? There are dazzling moments which dispel all the shadows around. She turns round quickly, that her joy may be a homage to him who, seated near her, with his head leaning against the wall and his rapt gaze lifted to the cupola, listens to these magical phrases, forgetting they are his own, and witnesses this triumph without regret or bitterness, without saying to himself for a single moment that all this glory has been stolen from him. Like those monks of the middle ages who grew old in building little-known cathedrals, the son of the villager contents himself with having done his work, and seeing it stand firmly in the broad sunlight. And for the self-sacrifice, the unconsciousness of his radiant smile, — for what of her own nature she perceives in him, — the queen holds out her hand to him with a gentle “Thank you! thank you!” Rosen, who is nearer, believes they are congratulating him on his son’s success. He perceives the queen’s hasty, grateful pantomime, and touches his rough mustache to the royal glove; and the two happy victims of the *fête* were forced to exchange from a distance, in one look, those unexpressed thoughts which bind souls together in mysterious and lasting ties.

The meeting is over. The noble Fitz Roy, applauded and complimented, has disappeared as if through a trap-door; the Letters, Sciences, Arts, have followed him, leaving the desk empty; and, through all the passages, the crowd, hurrying along, begin to exchange the remarks one hears on the breaking-up of an assembly, or when leaving a theatre, and which to-morrow will be the opinion of all Paris. Among these good people who are leaving,

many, pursuing the line of thought which has diverted their minds at the reading, expected to find chair-bearers before the Institute, but found awaiting them there the rain, with its heavy patter sounding above the noise of omnibuses, and the carnival din of steam-cars.

Only privileged ones, in the safety of their own carriages, will continue to lull themselves with the sweet monarchical illusion.

Under the slender-columned porch, while a crier is calling the royal carriages in the wet and glistening court, it is a pleasure to hear this aristocratic society chatter with the greatest animation while waiting for their majesties to come out: "What a meeting! What a success! If the Republic should be replaced!" The Princess de Rosen is almost surrounded. "You must be very happy," all say to her. "Oh, yes! very happy," she responds beamingly, looking very pretty, and frisking about, and bowing to the right and left, like a little pony at a menagerie.

Her uncle by her side is very expansive, although very much embarrassed by his white cravat and his *maître d'hôtel* shirt-front, which he tries to hide behind his hat, but feeling very proud all the same of his nephew's success. Certainly he knows better than any one what to think of the character of this success, and that Prince Herbert has not written a word of the crowned work; but at this moment he does not think of it, nor does Colette, I assure you. A true Sauvadon in her vanity, appearances suffice with her; and when she sees the waxed ends of the great mustache of her Herbert, who has come to meet her, sticking out among a crowd of swells who are congratulating her, she is so convinced that it was he who besieged Ragusa, and wrote the "Memorial," and

that his beautiful mustache does not conceal the lips of a fool, that she is obliged to restrain herself, lest there before every one she throw herself on his neck. And although the good fellow is delighted and confused at the ovations, and the glances he is favored with, — the noble Fitz Roy having just said to him solemnly, “When you wish, Prince, you shall be one of us,” — nothing is more precious to him than the unexpected reception of his Colette, and the almost loving *abandon* with which she leans on his arm, which has not happened to him since their wedding-day, when they walked out from the Church of Saint Thomas d’Aquin to the joyful peals of the organ.

But the crowd moves aside, and all take off their hats respectfully. The guests in the boxes descend, — all the fallen majesties who are returning to their shade after a few hours’ resurrection. They formed a true procession of royal ghosts, — the old blind man leaning on his daughter, and the Galician with her handsome nephew. A rustling of stiff stuffs was heard as on the passage of a Madonna of Peru. Finally came Queen Frédérique with her cousin and her son. The landau approaches the porch; and proudly holding up her handsome, radiant face, she enters it amid a restrained murmur of admiration. Themorganatic queen of the private stairway left before the close with d’Axel and Wattelet, so that nothing disturbs the glory of her departure. Now there is nothing more for people to talk of to each other, or to see. The tall valets hurry along with their umbrellas. For an hour there is a stamping of horses, a rolling of carriages, a closing of carriage-doors, mingled with the streaming of water, and echoes from the stone walls of names as they are being called, — echoes which haunt old buildings, but are not often awakened in the French Academy.

This evening the coquettish allegories of Boucher, painted on the panels of Herbert's chamber at Hotel Rosen, are roused from their languid poses, and their faded flesh-tints revive at hearing a little voice warble, —

“It is I: it is Colette.”

It was Colette, enveloped in a night-wrapper with floating Mechlin lace, who had come to say good-night to her hero, her knight, her man of genius.

Almost at the same time Elysée was walking alone in the garden in the Rue Herbillon, under the light foliage of the trees, through which gleamed a luminous, storm-swept sky, — one of those skies of June, where lingers a circle of light of the long days, sharply defining the shadows on the dusky turn of the paths, and making the house, with its closed blinds, stand out white and dead. No light was seen but the king's lamp in the upper story. There was not a sound save the trickling of water in the basins of the fountain, and the distant trill of a nightingale, to which other nightingales responded, floating through an air filled with the penetrating fragrance, exhaled by the rain, of magnolias, roses, and mint. The fever, which for two months — ever since the *fête* at Vincennes — had not left Elysée, and which burned on his forehead and hands, instead of growing calm in this burst of perfumes and song, throbbed and thrilled within him, sending its glowing waves to his heart.

“Ah, old fool! old fool!” said a voice near him, from under the hedge. He stopped, abashed: it was so true, so just, and what he had been telling himself for an hour.

“Fool! miserable maniac! You ought to be thrown into the fire, — you and your herbarium.”

“Is it you, Councillor?”

“Don’t call me ‘Councillor.’ I am one no longer. Nothing, nothing now; neither honor nor intelligence. Ah! *porco*.” And Boscovich, sobbing with real Italian passion, shook his comical head, which had a strange, weird look in the glow of light which fell on it through the linden-trees. The poor man had been a little out for some time. At one moment he would be very gay and talkative, and bore every one about his herbarium, — his famous herbarium at Laybach, — which he would soon get possession of, he would say; then all at once, in the midst of this delirium of words, he interrupted himself, looked at you from under his eyes, and you could not get another word out of him. This time Elysée thought he was becoming really mad, when, after this childish outburst, he sprang towards him, and seized his arm, crying out in the darkness, as one calls for help, —

“It is impossible, Méraut! it must be prevented.”

“What prevented, Councillor?” said the other, trying to disengage his arm from his nervous clasp.

Boscovich answered in a low voice, breathlessly, —

“The act of renunciation is ready, drawn up by me. At this very moment his Majesty is signing it. I never ought — But then he is the king, and there is my herbarium at Laybach that he promised to restore to me. Magnificent pieces” —

The monomaniac was let loose; but Elysée did not listen to him, stunned by this terrible blow. His first and only thought was for the queen. This, then, was the price of her devotion and self-denial, — the end of this day of sacrifice! How faded the glory which they wove around a brow which no longer wished a crown! In the garden, which had quickly become dark, he saw nothing but that light above shining on a myste-

rious crime. What could be done? How could it be prevented? By the queen alone. But how could he reach her? The fact is, that the chambermaid, Madame de Silvis lost in her fairy dreams, the queen herself, every one, believed that a fire was suddenly threatening the slumbering hotel when Elysée asked to speak to her Majesty. From the chambers came a chirping of women flurrying around as if a bird-cage had been awakened at an untimely hour. At last Frédérique appeared in the little *salon* where the tutor was waiting for her. She was enveloped in a long blue wrapper, which moulded her charming arms and shoulders. Never had Elysée felt so near to the woman.

"What is the matter?" she quickly asked, in a low voice, and with that quivering of the eyelids which waits for the first blow one sees approaching. At the first word she sprang forward, exclaiming, —

"That cannot be! That shall not be while I am alive!"

The violence of her movements shook down the phosphorescent tresses of her hair; and, in fastening them up with a turn of the hand, her motion was so tragic and free, that it caused her sleeve to slip up to her elbow.

"Awaken his Highness," she said, in a low voice, in the dim light of the luxurious room adjoining; then, without adding a word, she ascended to the king's room.



## CHAPTER X.

## A HOME SCENE.

ALL the charm of this June night entered through an open window of the large hall, where a single lighted candelabra left it sufficiently obscure for the moonlight to fall on the walls like a milky way, light up the polished bar of a trapezium, the arched bow of a suspended guzla, and the glass panes of a rather poorly furnished bookcase, which the pigeon-holes of Boscovich helped to fill, exhaling the dead odor of a cemetery of dried leaves. On a bundle of dusty papers on the table, a tarnished silver figure of Christ was lying; for, though Christian II. wrote but little, he remembered his Catholic education, and surrounded himself with pious objects; and sometimes, while sunk in dissipation, in the din and excitement of festive hours, with a hand already limp with intoxication, he felt of the coral rosary in his pocket, which never left him. By the side of the figure of Christ lay a large, heavy sheet of parchment, covered with a coarse, rather unsteady handwriting. It was the prepared act of renunciation of royalty. It lacked only the signature and a stroke of the pen; but this required a strong act of the will, and that was why Christian II. delayed, sitting motionless under the light of tapers prepared for the royal seal, and leaning his elbows on the table.

Near him, anxious, prying, and noiseless as a sphinx of

night, or the black swallow that flits around ruins, Lebeau, the confidential valet, watched him, and silently excited him to the deed, having finally reached that decisive moment for which the *coterie* had been waiting for months, passing through ups and downs, heart-beats, and all the uncertainties of a game in the hands of this rag of a king. Notwithstanding the magnetism of the overpowering desire, Christian, though holding the pen in his fingers, did not sign. Buried in his arm-chair, he was looking at the parchment, and dreaming. It was not that he would hold on to this crown, which he never desired or loved, and which, as a child, he felt too heavy, and whose irksome responsibilities he felt in after life. To free himself from it, place it in a corner of the *salon* which he never entered, and to forget it when out of doors as much as possible, he had already succeeded in doing. But the decision now to be made, and this extraordinary measure, frightened him ; yet there was no other way of procuring the money that was indispensable to his new life, there being notes for three millions signed by him which would soon come due, and which the usurer, a certain Pichery, a picture-dealer, did not wish to renew. Could he allow every thing to be seized at Saint Mandé? What then would become of the queen and the royal child? There would be scene after scene ; for he plainly foresaw the frightful results of his cowardice. Would it not be better to have done with it at once, and brave anger and recrimination with one stroke? And then — and then — all this was not the determining reason

He had promised the countess to sign this renunciation ; and upon this promise Sephora consented to let her husband go to London alone, and accepted the hotel

in Messina Avenue, and the title and name which bound her to Christian's arm ; reserving all else for the day when the king himself would bring the act signed by his own hand. She gave such reasons for this as a loving girl would, — perhaps later he might wish to return to Illyria, and abandon her for the throne and power : she would not be the first whom terrible state reasons had caused to tremble and weep. And d'Axel, Wattlelet, and all the swells in the Royal Club, little suspected, when the king, on coming out of Messina Avenue, joined them at the club, that he had passed the evening constantly repulsed and encouraged, quivering and strained as a bow, and held at the feet of this woman of implacable will and supple resistance, who left in his ardent grasp the icy, cold little hands of a Parisian who was skilful in freeing them and defending herself, while on her lips burned the maddening words, —

“ Oh, when you are no longer a king, I will be yours, wholly yours ! ” She made him pass through the dangerous alternations of passion and repulse ; and sometimes at the theatre, after an advance chilled by her cold smile, she would slowly lay aside her gloves, and look fixedly at him, and then, partly yielding, would give her bare hand as a first offering to his kisses.

“ Then, my poor Lebeau, you say that this Pichery will do nothing.”

“ Nothing, sire. If the payment is not made, the notes will go to protest.”

One should have heard the despairing gasp which emphasized this word “ protest ” to understand all the gloomy formalities it entailed, — stamped paper, the royal house taken possession of, profaned, and he himself turned into the street. Christian did not see this

himself: he was dreaming, and, having arrived at Sephora's in the middle of the night anxious and shuddering, stealthily mounted the staircase that was mysteriously draped, and entered the room where the night-lamp faintly glimmered through the lace-shade.

"It is done! I am no longer a king! Mine, wholly mine!" And the fair one yielded.

"Come!" said he with a start as his vision vanished. Then he signed.

The door opened, and the queen appeared. Her presence in Christian's room at this hour was so new and unforeseen, and they had lived apart so long, that neither the king who was about to sign his infamy, nor Lebeau who watched him, turned round at the slight sound. They thought it was Boscovich coming in from the garden. Gliding along like a shadow, Frédérique had already reached the table and the two accomplices, when Lebeau perceived her. Placing her finger on her lips, as a sign for him to be silent, she continued to advance, wishing to catch the king in the very act of betrayal, and to prevent his excuses, subterfuges, and useless dissimulation; but the valet braved her forbidding gesture by giving an alarm *à la d'Assas*: —

"The queen, sire!"

Furious, the Dalmatian struck the cheek of this vicious brute with the palm of her hand, which was hard and firm from horseback-riding, and drew herself up, waiting till the wretch disappeared before addressing the king.

"What has happened to you, my dear Frédérique? and who wishes me?"

Standing, leaning backward against the table which he tried to conceal behind him, in an easy *pose*, which displayed his foulard vest embroidered with pink, he smiled,

though his lips were rather pale. His voice, however, was calm, and his speech fluent; and he still possessed that graceful politeness which never forsook him in his wife's presence, and which formed between them something like the flowery, complicated arabesques on the hard, lacquered surface of a screen. With one word and motion of her hand she removed the barrier behind which he sheltered himself: —

“Oh, no speeches! no grimaces! I know what you were writing there! Do not try to lie to me.”

Then approaching him, her haughty figure towering above his in his timid abasement, she said, using “thou” in addressing him, which, as it was unusual with her, made her words serious, and almost solemn, —

“Listen, Christian! You have made me suffer much since I became your wife. I have only spoken of this once, you remember. When I saw that you no longer loved me, I ceased; but I was ignorant of nothing, — not of one of your acts of treachery and folly. You must be really mad, — mad as your father who wore himself out with love for Lola; mad as your grandfather Jean, who died mad in a shameful delirium, foaming and kissing in his gasps, and uttering words that made the sisters who had charge of him turn pale. Ah! it is the same hot blood, the same fire of hell, which devours you. At Ragusa, when you were away nights, they sought you at Fœdor's house. I knew it, and I knew that she left her theatre to follow you; but I made no reproaches: the honor of your name was safe. When the king was missing on the ramparts, I took care that his place was not vacant. But at Paris, at Paris!”

Till now she had spoken slowly and coldly, her voice falling at the end of each sentence in a tone of pity and

maternal reproof, inspired by the king's downcast eyes, and by his pouting face like that of a vicious child whom one lectures. But the word "Paris" put her beside herself. A city without faith,—a mocking, accursed city, with pavements stained with blood, and always raised in barricade and held by the mob! How possessed were all these poor, fallen kings, to take refuge in this Sodom, where the air is poisoned by massacre, and vices which destroy great races! It is this Sodom which made Christian lose what the maddest of his ancestors always knew how to keep,—their self-respect and pride of blood. Ever since the day of their arrival,—on the very first evening of their exile,—when she saw him so gay and excited, while all were weeping secretly, Frédérique divined the humiliation and shame that he would make her endure. Then in one breath, without stopping, and with cutting words that brought mottled red spots to the wan face of the royal libertine and streaked it as with the lash of a whip, she reminded him of all his faults,—of his rapid fall from pleasure to vice, and from vice to the level of crime:—

"You have deceived me before my very eyes in my own house. You have been an adulterer, sitting by my side at my own table; and, when you tired of the curly-headed doll who could not even conceal her tears, you, in your idleness, went to the gutter—into the mud of the streets—to boldly wallow. "The next day after your orgie, all covered with mire, you returned in bitter remorse.

"Do you remember how I found you stammering and stuttering that morning when you lost the throne for the second time? What have you not done? Holy Mother of the Angels! what have you not done? You traded with the royal seal; you sold crosses and titles."

And in a lower voice, as if she feared the silence and the night might hear her, she continued, —

“You also stole ! you stole ! Those diamonds and stones were removed by you. And I let my old Grœb be suspected, and sent away. I had to do it : the theft was known ; and we were forced to pretend some one was guilty, to avoid suspicion of the true thief. My constant anxiety was to save the king ; to endure and accept every thing, even the shame which in the eyes of the world would end by disgracing me. To excite and sustain myself in hours of trials, I made ‘For the crown !’ my watchword of combat. And now you wish to sell the crown, when it has cost me such anguish and so many tears ! you wish to exchange it for gold with that dull-faced Jewess whom you had the impudence to bring before me face to face to-day !”

He listened with downcast look, and without uttering a word, feeling perfectly dumbfounded, till the insult to her whom he loved made him spring to his feet ; and looking at the queen fixedly, with his face marked with a cross as from the blows of a whip, he said to her, still politely but very firmly, —

“Well, you are mistaken. The woman you speak of has nothing to do with the resolution I have made. What I am doing is for you and for myself, — for the happiness and peace of us both. Are you not weary of this life of expedients and privations ? Do you think I am not aware of what passes here ? that I do not suffer when I see this mob of tradespeople and creditors at your heels ? I heard that man in the court-yard the other day when I was entering. If it had not been for Rosen, I would have crushed him under the wheel of my phaeton. And you, behind the curtain of your room, were

watching his departure. A fine business for a queen ! We owe every one. There is one universal cry against us. Half of your people are kept waiting for their wages ; and two months have passed since the tutor received any thing. Madame de Silvis pays herself by majestically wearing your old dresses. And, some days ago, the councillor, placed in charge of the crown seals, borrowed of my *valet-de-chambre* the wherewithal to buy snuff. You see that I am informed of the state of things. And you have no idea how many debts I have. I am loaded with them. There will be a crash soon : it is inevitable. And you will see your diadem sold before long, in a doorway, with old dishes and knives."

Gradually led on by his mocking nature and the hoaxing habits of his circle, he dropped the reserved tone he used at first, and with his thin, insolent, nasal voice, poured forth words of ridicule, among which many must have been of Sephora's invention, who never lost an occasion to overcome with her satire her lover's last scruples.

"You accuse me of making speeches, my dear ; but it is you who are lavish with words. After all, what is this crown of Illyria you are always talking to me about ? It is of no value except on a king's head. Besides, it is a cumbersome, useless thing, which one conceals in a flight in a milliner's box, and exhibits under a globe, like a comedian's laurels, or the orange-blossoms of a *concierge*. You must be convinced of this, Frédérique. A king is only a king on the throne, with power in his hand : when fallen, he is less than nothing, — a mere rag. In vain we adhere to etiquette and to our titles, displaying our majesty everywhere, — on the panels of carriages, and on our sleeve-buttons ; encumbering ourselves with



old-fashioned ceremony. All that is hypocrisy on our part, and politeness and pity in those who surround us, — our friends and servitors. I am King Christian II. here to you and Rosen, and a few faithful ones ; but, when away, I become like other men, — Monsieur Christian Second ; not even a name, — nothing but a first name, — simply Christian, like a mounteback at the *Gaiété*."

He stopped, out of breath, never remembering having spoken so long while standing. The shrill notes of the fern-owl and the eager trills of nightingales pierced the silence of the night. A big miller, which had shortened its wings in the light, was flitting about, hitting against every thing. One heard its flying distress, and the stifled sobs of the queen, who could hold her own against anger and violence, but whom mockery, jarring against her sincere nature, found defenceless, like a valiant soldier who expects open blows and feels himself harassed with pricks. Seeing her weak, Christian thought her conquered, and, to complete his work, put the last touch to his burlesque picture of a monarch in exile : —

"What a pitiful figure are all these poor sovereigns *in partibus* playing at royalty, and draping themselves with the trumpery of their first rôles, and continuing to declaim before empty benches, with not a sou in the way of receipts ! Would they not do better to keep silent, and retire to common life and obscurity ? This passion for grandeur is a luxury which does very well for those who have a fortune. But think of those who have not one, — our poor cousins of Palermo, for example, with their wretched Italian cooking, and crowded into a house too small for them, where it always smells of onions when you enter. They are excellent people certainly ; but what a life they lead ! and yet there are others even more

unfortunate. The other day a Bourbon — a true Bourbon — was running after an omnibus. People shouted to him, ‘Full, sir!’ but he kept running. ‘I tell you it is full, my poor old man!’ they repeated. He got angry because they did not address him as ‘Your Highness,’ as if that could be seen in one’s cravat! We are like kings in the opera, I tell you, my dear; and it is to escape from this ridiculous situation, and shield ourselves in an assured and dignified existence, that I have resolved to sign this.”

He added, suddenly showing the crafty Slavonian brought up by Jesuits, “Remark, besides, that this signature is a farce. They return us our property after all; and I consider myself by no means pledged. Who knows? These millions will perhaps aid us in regaining the throne.”

The queen raised her head impetuously, and for a moment looked into his eyes steadily enough to make them blink; then, shrugging her shoulders, said, —

“Don’t make yourself any viler than you are. You know very well that when it is once signed — But, no: the truth is, that the strength fails you. You desert your post as a king in the most perilous moment, when the new society, which no longer wishes God or master, pursuing the representatives of divine right with its hate, makes the heavens over their heads and the ground under their feet tremble with bombs, balls, and the knife. No means are too severe. They betray and assassinate, in the midst of a procession or a *fête*, the best as well as the worst. There is not one of us who does not tremble when a man steps out from the crowd. Every petition covers a poignard. When coming out from one’s palace, who can feel sure of returning to it? And at this hour you choose to leave the battle.”

“ Ah, if it were only a matter of fighting ! ” said Christian II. quickly. “ But to struggle, as we do, against ridicule and want, and to feel that we sink deeper into the mire every day ! ”

A gleam of hope lighted Frédérique's eyes.

“ Is it true ? Would you fight ? Then listen. ” And she told him breathlessly, in a few brief words, about the expedition which Elysée and she had been preparing for three months, sending letter after letter, addresses, and despatches ; while Father Alphée was constantly travelling through the villages and mountains. For this time it is not the nobility they address, but the common people, — the muleteers and porters of Ragusa, the market-gardeners of Breno and Brazza, and the people from the islands who come to market in feluccas, — the primitive and traditional nation, ready to rise up and die for the king, but on condition of seeing him at their head. Companies were forming, and the watchword was already circulating ; and they only awaited a signal. The queen, hurrying out her words in a vigorous charge to conquer Christian's weakness, felt a pang of grief on seeing him shake his head, more indifferent even than discouraged. Perhaps at heart there was added the pique that he felt at all these preparations made without his knowledge ; but he did not think the project could be carried out. They could not advance into the country : they would have to get possession of the islands, and besiege a beautiful region with a very small chance of success, — a Duke of Palma adventure, a useless shedding of blood.

“ No : you see, my dear, the fanaticism of your chaplain and that hot-headed Gascon misled you. I have my information also, and it is more reliable than yours. The truth is, that in Dalmatia, as elsewhere, monarchy has had

its day. 'They have had enough of it there: **they** no longer wish it.'

"Ah! I well know the coward who wishes **no** more of it," said the queen.

Then she hastily withdrew, leaving Christian very much astonished that the scene had ended so soon. He quickly picked up the act of renunciation, and put it in his pocket; and was about leaving, when Frédérique returned, this time accompanied by the little prince.

Taken from his bed while fast asleep, and dressed in great haste, Zara, who had just passed from the hands of the *femme-de-chambre* into those of the queen without a word being uttered, opened his large eyes under his tawny curls, but did not ask a question; for the confused memory passed through his still dazed little head of similar awakenings for hasty flights, surrounded by pale faces and breathless exclamations. It was thus that he acquired the habit of abandoning himself to the guidance of others, provided that the queen called him in her grave, resolute voice, and he could feel the tender clasp of her arms, and her shoulder ready for him to lean on in his childish fatigue. She said to him, "Come!" and he came with confidence, feeling only astonished at the quiet around him after other nights full of roaring sounds and lurid sights, with the glare of flames, the noise of cannon and musketry.

He saw the king standing there, — not the pleasant, light-hearted father who sometimes surprised him in bed, or crossed the study-room with an encouraging smile, — but with a stern, weary face, which became still more so at their entrance. Frédérique, without saying a word, drew the child to Christian's feet, and, kneeling with a sudden, quick motion, made him stand before her, and clasped his little fingers between her hands, saying, —

"The king will not listen to me. He will listen to you, perhaps, Zara. Come ! say with me, 'My father' " —

The timid voice repeated, —

"My father " —

"My father, my king ! I implore you, do not rob your child. Do not take from him the crown he must wear some day. Remember that it is not yours alone ; that it comes from afar, from on high, from God, who sent it to the house of Illyria six hundred years ago. God wishes that I should be a king, my father. It is my inheritance, my property ; and you have no right to take it from me."

The little prince followed his mother's words with the supplicating looks, and low, fervent tones of a prayer : but Christian turned away his head, and shrugged his shoulders ; and, furious, though still polite, muttered a few words between his teeth : "Highly wrought-up, unbecoming scene ! Turn the head of that child." Then he disengaged himself, and went to the door. With one bound the queen sprang to her feet, looked at the empty table where the parchment had been spread, and, understanding that the infamous act had been signed, that he held it, fairly screamed, —

"Christian !"

He continued to walk off.

Frédérique took one step forward, and made a motion as if to gather up her dress to follow him ; then suddenly said, —

"Well, so be it."

He stopped, seeing her stand before the open window, with her foot on the narrow stone balcony, with one arm around her child, about to seek death ; and with the other threatening the coward who fled, while the moonlight shone in on the charming group.

"A king of comedy and a queen of tragedy!" she said in a grave and terrible voice. "If you do not instantly burn what you have just signed, and take an oath on the cross that you will never do it again, your race is ended, — your wife, your child — here, from this balcony — crushed to death."

And her words, and her beautiful body leaning over into the void, expressed such an impulse to leap, that the king, terrified, sprang forward to hold her back.

"Frédérique!"

At his father's cry, at the trembling of the arm which bore him, the child, who stood entirely outside of the window, thought it was over, — that they were to die. He did not utter a word or a complaint, since he was going with his mother: only his little hands clung around the queen's neck, and throwing back his head, from which hung down his hair like a victim, he closed his beautiful eyes to their frightful fall. It was so high!

Christian no longer resisted. Such resignation and courage in a child-king, who already knew this much of his future lot, — how to die bravely! The sight almost made his heart break. He threw the act, which he had been crumpling in his hand a moment, on the table, and fell sobbing into an arm-chair.

Frédérique, still mistrustful, looked the paper through from the first line to the signature; then held it close to a taper, and let it burn to her fingers; shook off the black ashes on the table, and left the room to put her son to bed, for he was beginning to fall asleep in his heroic *pose* of a suicide.

## CHAPTER XI.

## MILITARY PREPARATIONS.

A DINNER given to friends in the parlor of the old *bric-à-brac* establishment was drawing to its close. The old man Leemans, when alone, breaks a crust in company with Darnet at the end of the kitchen-table, which has neither cloth nor napkin. When he has company, as on this evening, the careful Auvergnat grumblingly removes the white slip-covering, carefully stows away the little mats, and arranges the table opposite "Monsieur's" portrait, in the room that is quiet and neat as that of a curate, and which is pervaded for a few hours with odors of a *ragoût* flavored with onion, and very excited discussions in the slang they use when talking about their dishonest money transactions. Ever since the "grand scheme" has been in preparation, these dinners at the *bric-à-brac* establishment have been frequent. It is well for those in partnership to see each other often, and to plan together; and in no other way could they do it so safely as at the end of this little out-of-the-way Rue Eginhard, which belongs to the past of ancient Paris. Here at least they could speak aloud, discuss, and plan; for the end was near. In a few days — indeed, in a few hours — the renunciation would be signed; and the affair, which had already consumed so much money, would begin to bring in considerable. The certainty of success kindles the eyes and brightens the voices of the guests

with golden cheerfulness, makes the table-cloth whiter, and the wine purer. A true festive dinner, presided over by Father Leemans and Pichery, his inseparable, — a wooden head, pomaded *à la Hongroise*, set in a stiff stock, with a bold military step, and the aspect of a disgraced officer: profession, picture-dealer and usurer, — a new business, complicated and very appropriate for the art-mania of our day. When the son of a family is hard up, and at his wits' end, he goes to Pichery, who has a sumptuous store in the Rue Lafitte.

"Have you a Corot, — a *chouette* Corot? I am crazy over that painter."

"Ah! Corot!" said Pichery, in ecstatic admiration, closing his eyes, which were like those of a dead fish. Then, all at once changing his tone, he exclaimed, "I have just what will suit you." And, on a tall easel wheeled opposite him, he showed a very pretty Corot, — a morning glimmering in silvery mist, with nymphs dancing under the willows. The dandy puts on his glass, and pretends to admire it.

"Swell! very swell! How much is it?"

"Fifty thousand francs," said Pichery, without moving a muscle. The other does not move a muscle either.

"For three months?"

"Three months, with security."

The dandy gives his note, carries the picture home or to his mistress, and for a whole day has the delight of saying at the club and on the boulevard that he has just bought a stunning Corot. The next day he sends his Corot to the auction-rooms, where Pichery has it bought back by Leemans at ten or twelve thousand francs, its true price. This is usury at an exorbitant rate, but usury secured and without risk. Pichery him-



self does not know whether the amateur buys seriously, or not. He sells his Corot very dear, — “frame and all,” as they say in this pretty business: and it is his right; for the value of an object of art is nominal, and he takes care to deliver only the authentic article, tested by Father Leemans, who furnishes him in addition all his artistic vocabulary, which is very surprising in the mouth of this veteran, who can make his face take any expression, and who is on the best terms with the young swells, and all the *cocottes* in the neighborhood of the opera, as is necessary in his business.

On the other side of the patriarch Leemans are Sephora and her husband, who, with their chairs and glasses close together, are playing lovers; for they have seen each other very seldom since this business first began. Tom Levis, who, in every one's belief is in London, lives shut up in his little *château* at Courbevoie, and uses his fishing-line all day for lack of dupes to catch, or occupies himself in playing terrible pranks on the Sprichts. Sephora, who maintains greater style than a Spanish queen, finely dressed and with great ceremony, awaits the king every hour, and leads the fast life of the *demi-monde*, which is so occupied and yet has so little that is entertaining, that these dames almost always go in couples to enable them to endure the long, dull promenades, or depressing leisure. But the Countess of Spalato has not her equal in the city. She cannot associate with women in forbidden circles, honest women do not visit her, and Christian II. could not endure to see about her the flock of idlers who fill the *salons* which only men visit. Therefore she always remains alone in her boudoir, which has painted ceilings, and mirrors encircled with roses and cupids, which only reflect her own indolent face, weary of

all the vapid sentiment which the king pours out at her feet like sick-headache perfumes exhaling from gold cups. Ah ! she would quickly exchange all this dull princely life for the little basement in the Rue Royale, with her buffoon opposite her performing the jig he danced when he rejoiced over his great strokes. She seldom has a chance to write him, and keep him informed of the affair and its progress.

So she is happy this evening as she sits close to him, and stirs him up. "Come, make me laugh," she says. And Tom exerts himself : but his spirit is not spontaneous ; and after every attempt at merriment he falls again into troubled thought, which he does not speak of, and which you could not guess in a thousand times' trying.

Well, I will tell you : Tom Levis is jealous. He knows that there can be nothing wrong between Christian and Sephora ; that the latter is too shrewd to yield without security. But the moment is near ; for, when the paper is signed, one must perform. And, upon my word, Tom feels an anxiety that is very strange in a man who is devoid of all superstition and childishness. Little feverish chills of fear run through him when his eyes rest on his wife, who has never looked so pretty, with an exceedingly attractive toilet, and this title of countess, which seems to refine her features, to brighten her eyes, and to raise her hair in the form of a crown studded with pearls. Evidently Tom Levis is not equal to his *rôle* : his shoulders are not strong enough for the business. He would give a good deal if he could take back his wife, and bring every thing to a standstill. But shame and fear of ridicule restrain him ; and then there is so much capital already put into the business ! The unhappy man debates within himself, turned from his purpose by the

various scruples the countess would never have believed him capable of. He affects great gayety, gesticulates with a dagger in his heart, and enlivens the table by relating some of the successful hits of the agency, and finishes by so rousing the old man Leemans, and the icy Pichery himself, that they take out from their bag their best jokes and amateur tricks.

They are here — are they not? — among partners and confederates, with elbows on the table. They tell about every thing, — the lower part of the hotel, its traps and snares ; the coalition of great merchants, who are rivals in appearance ; their tricks and Auvergnat trading, — that mysterious free-masonry which puts a true barrier of greasy collars and worn out frock-coats between the rare object and the caprice of a purchaser, and forces the latter into being foolish and paying high prices. They vie with each other in telling cynical stories, to prove who is the shrewdest and most skilful.

“ Have I told you the one about my Egyptian lantern and Mora? ” asked Leemans, sipping his coffee ; and he tells it for the hundredth time, as old warriors tell about their favorite campaign, — the story of that lantern which a Levantine in a strait let him have for two thousand francs, and which he sold again the same day for forty thousand to the president of the council, with a double commission, — five hundred from the Levantine, and five thousand from the duke. But what constitutes the charm of the story are the *ruses*, the subterfuges, and the manner of working up the rich, vain patron to a desire to purchase. “ Yes, no doubt, a fine piece ; but too dear, much too dear. I beg you, Duke, leave that folly to some one else. I am sure that the Sismondo — Ah ! the work in the mounting of these little shrines and this carved chain is

beautiful indeed!" And the old man, becoming animated at the laughter which shook the table, turns over a little note-book much worn at the edges, in which his inspiration is fed by the aid of a date, a cipher, and an address. All the famous amateurs are classed in it, like the *fiancées* with a large dowry on Monsieur de Foy's great book, with their peculiarities and manias, — the brunettes and the blondes; those whom it is necessary to treat rudely; and those who only believe in the value of an object when it costs a great price; and also the sceptical amateurs, and the innocent amateur, to whom one can say, when selling him an imitation, —

"Remember, now: don't let that go out of your hands."

In itself this note-book is worth a fortune.

"Say, Tom," said Sephora to her husband, whom she wished to show off, "suppose you tell them the story about your arrival at Paris — your first business in the Rue Soufflot, you know."

Tom does not need to be begged, pours out a little brandy to recover his voice, and relates, that about ten years ago, while returning from London, played out and ragged, with a last hundred-sou piece in his pocket, he learned from a former acquaintance, whom he met in an English tavern near the station, that the agencies were then occupied with a big affair, — the marriage of Mademoiselle Beaujars, the daughter of the contractor. She has twelve million dower, and has taken it into her head to marry a great lord, — a real one. They promise a magnificent commission, and the bloodhounds are many. Tom is not disconcerted, enters a reading-room, turns over the book of heraldry of France, Gotha, and Bottin, and finishes by discovering an ancient — very

ancient — family related to the most celebrated people living in the Rue Soufflot. The want of keeping of the title with the name of the street made him fear that the family fortunes were in a state of decay, or that there was a stain on their reputation. "On what floor is Marquis de X——?" He sacrifices his last silver piece, and obtains some information from the *concierge*, — high nobility; a widower; a son, who has left Saint Cyr; and a young lady, eighteen years old, and very well brought up. "Two thousand francs in rent, gas, water, and carpets," adds the *concierge*, in whose opinion all this increases his tenant's dignity. "Just what I want," thinks Tom Levis; and he goes up, rather overcome by the fine appearance of the stairs, a statue at the entrance, arm-chairs on every story, and the luxury of a modern house, with which his worn-out coat, his leaking shoes, and his very delicate commission form a strong contrast.

"When I was half-way there," related the agent, "I was tempted to go down again. Then, upon my faith! I thought it would be a famous thing to try and do it; and I said to myself, 'You have wit and coolness, and your living to get. All honor to intelligence!'" And I climbed up four steps at a time. I was shown into a large room, of which I quickly took an inventory. Two or three fine curiosities, some pompous relics, and a portrait of Largillières comprised the list, with furniture that showed there was great poverty in the background; which was also suggested by a broken-down lounge, arm-chairs that needed stuffing, and a fireplace colder than the marble of its mantel-piece. The master of the house arrives, — a majestic old fellow, *très chic*, like Samson in 'Mademoiselle de la Seiglière.'

"'You have a son, Marquis?'"

"At these words Samson rises indignantly. I mention the sum, twelve million. That makes him sit down again, and we talk. He begins by confessing that he has not a fortune equal to his name, — twenty thousand francs income at most, — and that he would not be sorry to regild his escutcheon. The son would have one hundred thousand francs dower.

"‘O Marquis! the name would suffice.’ Then we set the price of my commission, and I run off in a great hurry, — people waiting for me at my office. That was fine about my office! I did not even know where I should sleep at night. But, when I reached the door, the old man drew me back, and said good-naturedly, ‘I have a great mind to propose to you that you should marry my daughter also: she has no dower; for, to tell you the truth, I exaggerated just now in stating I had twenty thousand francs income. I have not half that sum; but I can dispose of the title of Roman count. Besides, if my son-in-law were in the army, my relations with the minister of war would enable me to assure him advancement.’ When I finished taking my notes, I said, ‘Count on me, Marquis.’ And I was just going out, when a hand was brought down on my shoulder. I turned round, and Samson was looking at me, laughing with such a droll air. ‘And then there is myself,’ he said.

"‘What, Marquis?’

"‘Faith, yes! I am not yet too *passé*, if I could get a chance.’

"He finally confessed that he was deeply in debt, without a sou to pay with. ‘*Pardieu!* my dear Mr. Tom, if you can find some good business-woman who thoroughly understands economy, — an old maid or widow, I don’t care which, — send her to me with her cash, and I will make her a marchioness.’

"When I left the place, my education was complete. I understood all there was to make trade in Parisian society, and the Levis Agency was morally founded."

This story was a wonder narrated, or rather acted, by Tom Levis. He would get up, and sit down again, imitating the majestic deportment of the old noble, who had so soon degenerated into a cynical Bohemian; and he showed how he spread his handkerchief between his knees, to cross one leg over the other, and repeated three times about the low condition of his resources. It might have been called a scene from the "Nephew of Rameau," but a nephew of Rameau in the nineteenth century, without powder or grace or a violin, and with something hard and ferocious, — the harshness of that bull-dog English accent, which added to the raillery of the former rough of the faubourgs. The rest laughed, and were greatly amused, making philosophical and cynical reflections on Tom's recital.

"You see, my children," said old Leemans, "if brokers understood each other, they would be the masters of the world. Every thing is traded in these times. Every thing must come to us, and leave a little of its skin behind as it passes through our hands. When I think what business has been done the past forty years in this hole in the Rue Eginhard, — all that I have melted down, sold, made over, and exchanged! I needed nothing but a crown to trade for; but now I have even that."

He rose, holding up his glass, and cried, with flashing, ferocious eyes, —

"Here's to the brokerage business, my children!"

Darnet, with her keen eyes peering out under her black Cantal cap, stood in the background watching all, listening to every thing, and getting instruction about

the business ; for she hoped to establish herself after " Monsieur's " death, and trade on her own account.

Suddenly the door-latch rattles violently, then strangles as if it had chronic catarrh. Every one started. Who could come at such an hour?

" It is Lebeau," said Sephora's father. " It can be no one but he."

And the *valet-de-chambre* was greeted with a noisy welcome ; for they had not seen him for a long time. And he entered, pale and haggard, clinching his teeth, and looking absolutely out of sorts.

" Sit down here, my old broker !" said Leemans, making a place between himself and his daughter.

" The devil !" exclaimed the new-comer at the sight of their excited faces, the table, and the remnants of the repast. " It looks as if you had been having a good time here."

At this observation, and the gloomy tone in which it was made, all looked at each other rather anxiously. "*Parbleu*, yes ! we enjoy ourselves, and make merry. Why should we be sad ?"

Monsieur Lebeau seemed dazed.

" What ! don't you know, Countess ? When did you see the king ?"

" Why, this morning, yesterday, — every day."

" Did he say nothing to you about the terrible interview ?"

Then in two words he describes the scene, — how the treaty was burned, and the business at the same time most probably destroyed.

" Ah, the rascal ! I am duped !" cried Sephora.

Tom, very much disturbed at this, looked at his wife, and into the very depths of her eyes. Could it be that



she had been so horribly imprudent as to — But the lady is not in a mood to explain herself, she is so carried away by her anger and indignation against Christian, who for a week has involved himself in a series of falsehoods to explain why the act of renunciation was not yet signed. Oh, the coward, the coward and liar! But why did not Lebeau warn them?

“Ah, yes! why?” said the *valet-de-chambre*, with his hideous smile. “It would have given me a great deal of trouble to have warned you. For ten days I have been on the road, — five hundred leagues without stopping to take breath or undress. There was no way even to write a letter, watched as I was by a frightful monk, a Franciscan father, who is quick to suspect, and plays with the knife like a bandit. He watched all my movements, and did not let me out of his sight a moment, under the pretext that he did not know enough French to go alone and make himself understood. The truth is, they mistrust me at Saint Mandé, and have profited by my absence to plot a great undertaking.”

“What is it?” asked every eye.

“It has to do, I believe, with an expedition to Dalmatia.”

“It is that devil of a Gascon who has stirred them up.”

“Oh! I said that you should have gotten rid of him in the beginning.”

You could not hide any thing from the *valet-de-chambre*, who had long ago scented these preparations in the air, and observed that letters were sent off every hour, and that mysterious meetings were held. One day, on opening an album of water-colors, which that little fool Madame de Rosen had left lying round, he saw uniforms and costumes designed by her, — “Illyrian Volun-

teers," "Dragoons of the Faith," "Blue Shirts," and "Defenders of Justice."

Another day he surprised the princess and Madame de Silvis in a grave discussion on the form and size of the rosettes. From all this, and a word he caught now and then, he concluded they were planning the great expedition; and the journey they have just made him take is not probably unknown to them. The little man in black—a kind of dwarf, whom they sought in the mountains of Navarre—must be some great soldier, commissioned to lead the army under the command of the king.

"What? the king will go too!" cried Sephora's father, looking at her with scorn.

A tumult of words follows this exclamation:—

"And our money?"

"And the notes?"

"It is an outrage!"

"It is a theft!"

And, as in these times politics are the Esop's dish set before every one, Pichery, who is a strong imperialist, and as stiff as the stock around his throat, apostrophizes the Republic:—

"They could not have done such a thing under the Empire as to threaten the peace of a neighboring state!"

"It is very certain," observed Tom Levis gravely, "very certain, that, if they knew it at the presidency, they would not suffer it. They must be warned, and stirred up."

"Yes, I have thought of it," resumed Lebeau. "Unfortunately I know nothing positively. They will not listen to me, and then our people mistrust. They have taken every precaution to avert suspicion. Thus this evening,



Their waltz becomes a march and promenade. Page 253.



the queen's anniversary, they are to give a great *fête* at the Hôtel de Rosen. Go and tell the authorities that all those dancers are about to conspire and plan battles ! There is, however, something unusual about this ball."

Then for the first time they remark that the *valet-de-chambre* is in evening-dress, light shoes, and white cravat ; for he is charged with arranging the buffets, and must return very quickly to Isle Saint Louis. The countess, who has been meditating for a moment, says suddenly, —

"Listen, Lebeau ! If the king leaves, you will know it : will you not ? They will inform you, if only to fasten his trunk. Well, let me know an hour before ; and I swear to you that the expedition will not take place."

She says this in her quiet voice, but slowly, and in a firm, decided manner. And while Tom Levis moodily wonders how Sephora could prevent the king from leaving, and the other partners, who are all disconcerted, are calculating the cost to them should the affair not succeed, Lebeau returns to his ball, hurrying along on the toes of his pumps through the labyrinth of little dark streets, whose lines were broken by old roofs, *moucharabies*, and portals bearing escutcheons, and all this aristocratic quarter of the last century which is transformed into stores and manufactories, and which, shaken in the daytime by heavy trucks and the tramping of poor people, at night resumes its character of a curious dead city.

The *fête* was seen and heard from a distance, — a summer-evening *fête*, whose sounds reached both shores of the Seine ; while the lights were reflected as from the glare of a fire to the end of the island, which seems, as it projects into the undulating water, like the high, round poop of a huge ship at anchor. On approaching, one

distinguishes the high windows flooded with light behind the curtains. A thousand colored lights hung on the bushes and the venerable trees in the garden and on the Quai d'Anjou, which is usually quiet at this hour, and the steady beams from the lanterns affixed to carriages cut through the darkness. The Hôtel de Rosen has not seen such a *fête* since Herbert's marriage ; and that of this evening was even more extensive and livelier, all the windows and doors being thrown open to the splendors of a starry night.

The first floor formed a long gallery of *salons*, one opening into the other, and as lofty as a cathedral, adorned with paintings and ancient gilding, where the Venetian and Holland chandeliers and Chinese lanterns, suspended from the ceiling, shed their light over a peculiar decoration with hangings, over which played a shimmering of red and greenish-gold color, heavy shrines of massive silver, framed ivories in laid work, old tarnished tin mirror, reliquaries, standards, and treasures from Montenegro and Herzegovinia, which Parisian taste had grouped together with no element that was harsh or too foreign. The band, on a platform of an ancient oratory recalling that of Chenonceaux, was surrounded with banners, which screened the chairs reserved for the king and queen ; and contrasting with all this representation of the past and glitter of costly antique treasures, which would have transported Father Leemans, was the mad, dizzy whirl of the waltz of the day, through which glided long embroidered trains, whose wearers, with dazzling eyes glancing steadily through a cloud of *crêpé* hair, floated along, defiant in their brilliant youth, — willowy, graceful blondes, and brunettes with complexion of palest olive. From time to time some couple, threading their way

through the whirling crowd of dancers and the confused mass of silken stuffs whose rustling forms a coquettish, mysterious murmuring as an accompaniment to the music, reach a window opening to the floor, and, passing through it, receive on their heads, thrown backwards, the glare of the frontal on which the queen's cipher is inscribed in flaming gas-jets. In the garden, guided by the music, they follow the measures of the dance with hesitating step, stopping occasionally when the sound is faint ; and finally their waltz becomes a march and promenade, cadenced and harmonious, following along the fragrant clusters of magnolias and rose-bushes. But with the exception of the rare, curious decorations, and a few foreign types of women with tawny hair and the soft, supple motions of the Slavonian, at first glance one only saw one of those society parish festivals such as the Faubourg Saint Germain, which is represented to-night at the Hôtel de Rosen by the most ancient and high-sounding names, gives sometimes in the old gardens in the Rue de l'Université, where the dancers pass out from waxed floors on to the lawns, and where black coats are relieved by light pantaloons ; and these out-of-door *fêtes* are freer and gayer than any others.

In his room on the second story, the old duke, who had been racked for a week with an attack of sciatica, was listening to the echoes of his ball, burying his head under the coverlet, and stifling cries of pain, and cursing like a soldier at the ironical cruelty of the affliction which forced him to keep his bed on such a day, and made it impossible for him to join all the fine young men who were to leave the next day. The passports having been given, and the order of battle arranged, the ball was intended as a farewell, a sort of defiance to the mischances of war, and at

the same time a precautionary measure to blind the French police. Though the duke could not accompany the volunteers, he consoled himself with the thought that his son Herbert, as well as his crowns, would be in the expedition ; for their Majesties consented to allow him to defray the expenses. On his bed, mingled with officers' maps, and plans of strategy, lay memoranda of the equipment, boxes of guns, boots, blankets, and provisions for the campaign ; all of which he was carefully verifying with a terrible puckering of his mustache, the grimace of an heroic royalist struggling against his parsimonious and molelike instincts. Now an amount or some information was needed : then he would send for Herbert to come up, — which was an excuse to keep the tall son a few minutes at his bedside, as he was to leave him the next day for the first time, and he might perhaps never see him again, — the son for whom he felt the deepest tenderness, poorly dissimulated under a majestic deportment and silence. But the prince could not stay : he was in a hurry to go down again, and do the honors of the hotel, and especially desired not to lose one moment of the few brief hours he could yet pass with his dear Colette.

Standing with him in the first *salon*, she helped him to receive his father's guests, and was prettier and more elegant than ever in her close-fitting tunic of very old lace made from the surplice of a Greek archbishop, and whose softness well became her fragile beauty, which this evening was marked by a mysterious, almost grave, manner. This gave a look of repose to her features, and a depth to her eyes, which were of the same shade of blue as the little rosette waving among her curls beneath a diamond *aigrette*, — list ! a rosette of the Illyrian volun-



teer, a pattern chosen for the expedition, and designed by the princess, who, the dear little one, had not been idle for three months. Copying proclamations, carrying them secretly to the convent of the Franciscans, designing costumes and banners, and tracking the police, whom she fancied were always at her heels, was the way she filled her rôle of a great royalist lady, inspired by her early reading at the *Sacré Cœur*. There was but one thing wanting in this programme of Vendean brigandage : she could not leave, and follow her Herbert. For now it was Herbert, nothing but Herbert. Through a kindness of nature, she no longer thought of the other any more than of the unfortunate *ouistiti* so cruelly dashed to pieces against the river-bank near by. The delight of assuming a man's costume, and putting on small-sized high boots, was denied Colette for two reasons, — one, her duties towards the queen ; and the other, a very private one, whispered the evening before in the aide-de-camp's ear. . . . There were many secrets for the little woman to keep ; and, notwithstanding her lips were closed in mysterious silence, the adorably speaking look in her eyes, and the languid manner in which she leaned on Herbert's arm, would readily tell all for her.

Of a sudden the band ceases to play, and the dance stops, and every one rises to greet Christian and Frédérique as they enter. They have crossed the three *salons*, which are resplendent with national treasures, and in every part of which the queen has seen her cipher embroidered with flowers, and lights, and precious stones, and in which every thing has spoken to them of their country and its glories ; and now they pause on the threshold of the garden. Never has monarchy been represented in a prouder or more brilliant manner, a

perfect couple to be engraved on coins of a people, the frontal of a dynasty. The queen, in particular, is charming, looking younger by ten years in a splendid white dress, and having as her only ornament a heavy amber necklace, with a cross for pendant. This necklace, having been consecrated and blessed by the Pope, has its legend, which the faithful repeat to themselves in a low voice. She wore it all through the siege of Ragusa, lost it twice, and found it again by a miracle, during the *sorties*, under the fire of battle. She has a superstition about it, and has made a queen's vow upon it, without thinking of the charming effect of these gilded pearls so near her hair, whose brightness they, as it were, reflect.

While the sovereigns are standing there radiant, and admiring the *fête* and the fairy-like scene in the lighted garden, three strokes of a bow in strange, thrilling, powerful chords, suddenly are heard from a cluster of rhododendrons. All the Slavonians among the company tremble on recognizing the sound of the guzlas, of whose long-armed mandolins one has a glimpse through the dusky verdure. The music begins with a murmuring prelude, like the rolling in of distant waves in cadenced measure, coming nearer, leaping higher, swelling louder, and spreading wider. It seems to symbolize a heavy cloud charged with electricity, as from time to time the swiftest bow emits quivering strokes like lightning-flashes, and soon bursts forth the stormy, voluptuous, heroic rhythm of the national air, which is both a hymn and dancing melody, — the air of "Rodoïtza," which in Illyria is heard at every *fête* and every battle, and presents the double character of its ancient legend: The Hungarian soldier Rodoïtza, having fallen into the hands of the Turks, feigns death to escape. They kindle a fire

on his bosom ; but he does not move. Then a serpent, excited by the sunlight, is placed upon it. They drive twenty nails under his finger-nails, and he still is as motionless as stone. Then they send for Haïkouna, the tallest and most beautiful daughter of Zara, who dances while singing the national air of Illyria. At the very first measures, as soon as Rodoïtza hears the rattling of the sequins of the fair one's necklace, and the fringe around her belt, he smiles, and opens his eyes, and would be lost, if the dancer, taking a sweeping step, had not flung across his animated face the silken scarf which she weaves as a crown above her to give emphasis to her dance. Thus he was saved ; and that is why for two hundred years the national air of Illyria has been called the air of Rodoïtza.

On hearing it under the sky of the land of exile, all the Illyrians, men and women, grew pale. This appeal of the guzlas, which the band at the end of the *salons* softly accompanies, like a murmur of waves heard above the cries of the storm-bird, is the voice of their native land trembling with memories and tears, silent regrets, and hopes. The large, heavy bows, like those used in combat, do not vibrate on common chords, but on nerves strained and ready to sunder like delicate, resonant fibres.

These young men, brave and proud, with the deportment of Hungarian soldiers, feel all the indomitable courage of Rodoïtza that was so well rewarded by the love of a woman. These beautiful Dalmatians, tall as Haïkouna, have at heart her tenderness for heroes. And the old men while thinking of their distant country, and mothers when looking at their sons, all long to sob ; and all, were it not for the presence of the king and queen, would mingle their voices with the loud shrill

cry which the players of the guzlas, their piece being concluded, pour forth to the stars in a final burst of harmony.

Immediately afterwards the dancing is resumed with an *abandon* and surprising spirit in a society where people seldom amuse themselves except in a conventional way.

Decidedly, as Lebeau said, there is something out of the common order in this *fête*, — something ardent, feverish, and passionate, which one recognizes in the clasp of arms around the dancers' waists, their excitement, and certain sparkling looks that are exchanged, even to the cadences of the waltzes and mazurkas, where all at once a clicking like that of stirrups and spurs is heard.

Towards the end of a ball, when the pale morning light breaks through the windows, the last hour of pleasure has this hurried ardor of intoxication and exhaustion. But here the ball has hardly begun ; and already hands burn under their gloves, and hearts beat under the bouquets on their corsage or the little diamond brooches. When a couple float by, inspired by the music and by love, eyes follow them with a smiling, tender gaze ; for indeed every one knows that all these fine dancers — the exiled nobility of Illyria, with their sovereign, and the French nobility, always ready to give their blood for a good cause — are to leave at daybreak for a bold, perilous expedition.

Even in event of victory, how many of these proud young men who enlist unconcernedly will return ? How many before a week will be biting the dust on the other side of the mountains, still having in their ears — in which the blood, being turned from its course, is buzzing — the sound of this intoxicating melody of the mazurka ! It is the approach of danger which mingles the anxiety of a night before battle with the life of the ball, making

eyes glisten with tears and lightning-flashes, now brave, then languishing.

What can one refuse to him who leaves us, who is going to die perhaps? And with death hovering over you, whose wing brushes you as you move to the sound of the violins, how close it makes the clasp of an arm ! and how it hastens avowals !

Fugitive loves, meeting of ephemera crossing the same sunbeam ! They have never seen each other before, and will never see each other again, no doubt ; and yet two hearts are enchained. A few, the proudest, try to smile in spite of their emotion ; but with how much sweetness under the irony ? And they whirl round in the dance with heads thrown back, and curls flying, each couple oblivious of all but each other in the dizzy round of the intricate mystical movement of a waltz of Brahms or a mazurka of Chopin.

There was one person who was also thrilled and deeply moved. It was Méraut, in whom the chant of the guzlas—now soft and sweet, then full of savage energy—had awakened the adventurous Bohemian mood which is part of every Southern temperament, which makes one feel a mad desire to go far away, on unknown roads, out to the light, to adventure, and battle, and to do some proud and valiant deed for which women would admire him. Though he did not dance, and would not fight, he was full of the intoxication of this heroic ball. To think that all these young men were to leave, to give their blood, and to perform dangerous and valiant deeds, while he remained behind with old men and children ; to think, that, having organized the crusade, he would let it be entered upon without him, — caused him inexpressible sadness and annoyance. Thought felt ashamed in the pres-

ence of action. And perhaps, too, this heart-rending sensation and longing to die, which the songs and Slavonian dances poured into his veins, was increased by Frédérique's beaming pride as she leaned on Christian's arm. One could see how happy she was at finding at last a king and warrior in her husband.

Haïkouna, Haïkouna ! in the clinking of arms you can forget, and pardon all, — treachery and falsehoods. What you love above every thing is physical bravery ; and to it you will always throw the handkerchief warm with your tears, and filled with the delicate fragrance of your face. While he grieves thus, Haïkouna — who has just perceived in a corner of the *salon* this broad poetical brow around which waves the abundant hair which is so rebellious and unconventional — smiles, and beckons him to approach ; for she seems to have divined the cause of his sadness.

“What a beautiful *fête*, Monsieur Méraut !” Then she added, lowering her voice, —

“I owe even this to you. But we owe you so much, one hardly knows how to thank you.”

It was indeed he whose sturdy faith had breathed on all these dull flames, restored hope to fainting hearts, and prepared the uprising by which they were to profit on the morrow. The queen did not forget it ; and there was no one in the illustrious assembly to whom she would have spoken with this deferential kindness, this sweet look of gratitude, here, before every one, in the respectful circle made around sovereigns. But Christian II. approaches, and takes Frédérique's arm.

“The Marquis of Hezeta is here,” said he to Elysée.  
“Have you seen him?”

“I am not acquainted with him, sire.”

“He pretends, however, that you are old friends. But here he is !”

This Marquis of Hezeta was the chief who was to command the expedition in the place of old General de Rosen. In the last *coup de main* of the Duke of Palma, he showed astonishing qualities as a military leader ; and if they had listened to him the battle would never have had its pitiful end. When he saw his efforts wasted, and the claimant himself give the example and the signal for flight, the ringleader, being weary and misanthropical, plunged into the depths of the Basque mountains, and lived there out of reach of childish conspiracies, false hopes, and sword-thrusts in the water, which exhausted his moral strength. He wished to die in obscurity in his country, but was tempted once more to adventure by the captivating royalism of Father Alphée, and the fame of Christian II.'s bravery. The partisan's ancient nobility, his romantic life spent in exile, its persecutions, great brilliancy, and fanatical cruelty, surrounded the Marquis José Maria de Hezeta with an almost legendary interest, and made him the hero of the evening.

“How do you do, Ely?” said he, approaching Elysée, and holding out his hand, and calling him by his childhood's name in the time of the Enclos de Rey. “Eh, yes ! it is I. It is your old teacher, Monsieur Papel.”

His black coat, covered with crosses and orders, and his white cravat, changed him but little ; nor had even the twenty years which had since passed over his enormous dwarf's head, which was so browned by sunburn and the dust of the mountains, that the frightful and characteristic vein in his face was hardly seen. With it his royalist stubbornness seemed to be lessened, as if he had left a part of the early beliefs and illusions of his

youth at the bottom of the Basque cap thrown by him into a stream at the end of a campaign.

Elysée was strangely surprised at hearing the voice of his former teacher, who had made him what he was.

“You see, my little Ely” —

Little Ely was two feet taller than he, and had not a few gray streaks in his hair.

“It is over. There are no more kings. The principle remains, but men are wanting. Not one of those unhorsed men is capable of remounting; not even one has a real desire. Ah! what have I not seen, what have I not seen, during this war?”

A scarlet flush spread over his forehead, and suffused his eyes, which had a fixed stare, as if they were enlarged at the vision of shame, cowardice, and treachery.

“But all kings are not the same,” protested Méraut; “and I am sure that Christian” —

“Yours is no better than ours, — a child, caring only for amusement; not an idea, nothing that indicates will in those pleasure-loving eyes. Only look at him!”

He pointed to the king, who was waltzing into the room with suffused eyes and moist forehead, his little round head bowed over his partner's bare shoulder as if it would rest there, while the breath from his parted lips touched it. In the increasing intoxication of the ball, the couple passed near them without seeing them, their rapid breathing reaching them as they swept past; and, as people poured into the gallery to see Christian II. dance, — the first waltzer in his kingdom, — Hezeta and Méraut took refuge in the deep embrasure of one of the windows which opened on the Quai d'Anjou. They



remained there a long time, partly within the noise and whirl of the ball, and partly in the cool darkness and soothing silence of the night.

"Kings no longer believe in any thing, no longer desire any thing. Why should we hold out for them?" said the Spaniard savagely.

"You no longer have faith, and yet you are going."

"Yes, I am going."

"Without hope?"

"Only one, — that of getting my head shot off, — my poor head that I know not where to lay."

"And the king?"

"Oh, I feel easy about him!"

Did he mean that Christian II. had not yet mounted, or that, like his cousin the Duke of Palma, he would always return safe from the battle? He did not explain himself further.

The dancers continued in their mad whirls; but Elysée, discouraged by his old teacher and his own illusions, saw them now with different eyes. He felt a deep pity for all the brave youth who were so gayly preparing to go and fight under hopeless chiefs; and already the *fête*, with its confusion and gayety and softened lights, was obscured by the dust of a battle-field, — the grand *mêlée* after a defeat, where the unknown dead are gathered together. For a moment, to escape this gloomy vision, he leaned on the window-seat, and looked out on the deserted quay, where broad streams of light were reflected from the palace into the Seine beyond. And he listened to the swollen and troubled water, which mingled the sound of its currents, and that of its furious ebb against the arch of the bridges, with the sighs of the violins, and the heart-rending complaints of the guzlas; and

at one time leaped up with a gurgle like the sobs of an oppressed heart, and at another poured forth in great waves in a wide circle, gushing out like blood from a newly opened wound.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE NIGHT-TRAIN.

"We leave this evening at eleven o'clock from the Lyons station. Destination unknown, probably Cette, Nice, or Marseilles. Let me hear from you."

When this note, scribbled in haste by Lebeau, reached the Rue de Messina, the Countess de Spalato had just left the bath, and — fresh, odorous, and supple — was moving busily to and fro from her room to her boudoir, watering and caring for her basket flowers and her plants, and wearing a pair of light Swedish gloves that reached to the elbows for this promenade through her artificial garden. She did not interest herself in any thing else, but sat reflecting a moment in the quiet half-light, the blinds being down, then made a little decided gesture, and shrugged her shoulders, which signified, "Bah! who wishes the end?" And she immediately rang for her *femme-de-chambre*, that she might be ready when the king should come.

"What is Madame going to put on?"

Madame looked into the glass as if to ask it for an idea.

"Nothing. I shall remain as I am."

Nothing indeed could make her prettier than her long flannel robe, with its delicate, pale color, and soft, clinging folds, and a large fichu fastened like a child's sash at her waist behind; with her black hair twisted and frizzled,

and carried up very high on her head, exposing the neck, and the line where the shoulders began, which one could divine were warmer in tone than her face, and of a clear, mellow amber, and very smooth.

She decided — and she was right — that a finished toilet would not be as becoming as this dishabille, which would give her still more the appearance of a simple little girl, which the king liked so much in her, but which obliged her to breakfast in her room ; for she could not go downstairs in such a costume. She kept house in dignified style, and could no longer indulge in the fancies and Bohemian ways of her life at Courbevoie. After breakfast she seated herself in her boudoir, from which a veranda projected over the avenue, and quietly watched for the king in the rosy reflections of the curtains, as she formerly sat at the window in her parent's *bourgeois* home. Christian never came before two o'clock ; but after that time she was filled with an anxiety that was new to her placid nature, — that of waiting, — at first feeling but slightly agitated, like a ripple bubbling on the water ; then becoming nervous, excited, and restless. There were but few carriages at this hour in the quiet avenue, which was flooded with sunlight between its double row of plane-trees and new hotels, which extended to the gilded gate of Park Monceaux, the glass of whose lamp-posts glittered in the sun's rays. At the least sound of wheels, Sephora drew aside the curtain to get a better view, and, being disappointed each time that she expected to see him, felt irritated by the calm serenity and the country quiet out of doors.

What could have happened? Would he really leave without seeing her?

She sought reasons and excuses : but, when one is

waiting for another, one's whole being is strained in expectation and suspense ; and one's ideas are as fleeting, disconnected, and unfinished, as the stuttering words on one's lips. The countess felt this torture, this numbness at the ends of her fingers, where the nerves become very sensitive. Again she raised the pink awning. A warm wind stirred the foliage of the branches, and a coolness arose from the ground, where the watering-carts had sprinkled the track of carriages, which were now more numerous on their way to the *bois* for the five-o'clock drive. She began to be seriously frightened at being abandoned by the king, and sent off two letters, — one to Prince d'Axel's house, and the other to the club ; then she dressed herself, not being able to remain until evening in the attire of a little girl coming from the bath, and again began her promenade from her chamber to her boudoir, to her dressing-room, and soon all over the hotel, trying, by moving about, to forget that she was waiting.

It was not a little *cocotte* cage that the Spalato had bought ; nor was it one of those splendid houses with which the millionaire traders have encumbered the new localities in the western part of Paris, but an artistic hotel, very worthy of the names of the surrounding streets, — Murillo, Velasquez, Van Dyck, — and which was distinguished in every way from its neighbors, from the crowning of its *façade* to the knocker of its door. It was built by Count Plotnicki for his mistress, an ugly woman, on whose marble toilet-table he placed every morning a thousand-franc note folded in a square ; and had been sold pell-mell, with all its art-furniture, for two millions, on the death of the wealthy Pole, who left no will ; and Sephora had gained these treasures all at once.

Down the heavy staircase of carved wood, whose steps would support a carriage and horses, and which makes a dark background to the lady's grave beauty, like that in a Dutch painting, the Countess of Spalato descends to her three *salons* on the ground-floor,—the *salon* containing Dresden china, the little Louis XV. room, filled with a ravishing collection of vases, statuettes, and enamels, in the fragile style of the eighteenth century, which seem to be moulded by the rosy fingers of favorites, and brightened by the roguishness of their smiles; the *salon* of ivory ornaments, which are displayed under glass lined with flame-color, ivories from China, with a quantity of little figures, trees with fruits of precious stones, fishes with eyes of jade, and ivory figures of the middle ages, with a mournful, passionate expression, and on which the blood in red wax on the crucifixes makes a spot as on the deathly pallor of human flesh; the third room, lighted as a studio, and hung in Cordova leather, is waiting to be furnished by Leemans. Usually the soul of this female *bric-à-brac* dealer is exalted among these pretty things, beautified to her still more by the bargain she made. To-day she goes in and out of the rooms without looking at any thing, or seeing any thing, her thoughts far away, lost in irritating reasoning. What! he would leave her thus? Then he did not love her; and she had been so certain that she had thoroughly captivated and secured him!

The servant returns. No news of the king. They have not seen him anywhere. That was just like Christian! Feeling himself weak, he fled and concealed himself. For a second this woman, who has such mastery over herself, is roused from her calmness by intense

anger. She would break and tear every thing to pieces around her, were it not for her long habit of selling articles, which, visibly as it were, sets a value on every object. Lying back in an arm-chair, while the declining day renders all her costly treasures of yesterday invisible, she sees them vanish from her with her dream of a colossal fortune. The door is thrown violently open.

“Dinner is ready, Countess !”

She must seat herself at table all alone in the stately dining-room, on whose eight panels are large portraits by Frantz Hals estimated at eight hundred thousand francs, — stern, dull faces, stiff and solemn in their high ruffs, but less solemn than the steward with a white cravat who is at the buffet carving the dishes, which are served by two droll mutes dressed in nankeen. The irony of this pompous service in contrast with the abandonment which threatens Madame de Spalato contracts her heart with spite ; and one would say that the servants suspect something, the valets’ scornfulness so increases as they stand in the most ceremonious attitude while she eats, and wait till she finishes, grave and immovable as a photographer’s assistants after they have placed a sitter before the instrument. Gradually, however, the abandoned one takes comfort, and recovers her true nature. No : she will not allow herself to be cast off thus. Not that she cares for the king ; but the business, the great scheme, and her self-love, are at stake before her associates. Well, then, her plan is made. Ascending to her room, she writes a word to Tom. Then, while the servants in the basement are dining, and gossiping about the solitary and troubled day of their mistress, the countess with her little hands, which are not awkward, prepares a travelling-valise, which has often made the journey from the agency

to Courbevoie, throws over her shoulders a cloak of woollen *beige* for the cold night, and with her bag in her hand, like a young lady in a store who has received her wages, stealthily leaves her palace on foot for the nearest carriage-station.

Christian II., on his part, had passed a no less anxious day. Having remained very late at the ball with the queen, he awoke with his head and heart full of the heroic murmuring of the guzlas. The preparations for the journey — examining his weapons, as well as the costume of a lieutenant-general, which he had not put on since Ragusa — kept him until eleven o'clock, followed and watched by Lebeau, who was greatly perplexed, and dared not push his insinuating questions too far. At eleven o'clock the little court assembled for a low mass said by Father Alphée in the *salon*, which was transformed into an oratory, the mantle-piece serving as an altar, and the velvet lambrequins being covered with an embroidered cloth. The Rosens were absent; the old man being in bed, and the princess having gone to the station with Herbert, who had left with several young men. Hezeta was to follow them in the next train; and all the little troop slipped away thus in the daytime, not to excite suspicion.

This private mass, which recalled times of trouble, the exalted face of the monk, and the military energy of his gesture and voice, savored of incense and powder; the religious ceremony being made solemn by the thought of the approaching battle.

The breakfast-hour was made oppressive by these mingled emotions, although the king had a certain vanity about leaving only agreeable remembrances: and he affected a respectful, tender manner towards the queen; but it was defeated by Frédérique's rather mistrustful cold-



ness. The child's eyes were timidly watching them, for the horrible scene of the other night haunted his youthful memory, and gave him nervous intuitions above his age. The Marchioness de Silvis gave heavy sighs of farewell. Elysée, whose confidence had entirely returned, could not restrain his joy when thinking of that counter-revolution of the people that he had dreamed of so long, — of the mob forcing the doors of a palace to gain an entrance for a king. According to him success was not doubtful. Christian had not the same confidence ; but beyond the unpleasantness of leave-taking, when it seems that a solitude is created all at once by a premature separation from objects or beings who surround you, he felt no gloomy apprehension, but a relief from a very false situation, surrounded as he was by threatening due-bills and obligations of honor. In case of victory the civil list would discharge every thing : defeat, on the contrary, would bring about a general ruin. Death, a ball in the forehead, full in the face, he thought of as a final solution of money and heart troubles ; and his light-heartedness was a good medium between the queen's abstraction and Elysée's enthusiasm. But, while they were all three talking in the garden, a servant passed.

"Tell Sammy to harness up," ordered Christian.

Frédérique trembled.

"Are you going out?"

"Yes, for prudence' sake. Yesterday's ball must have made Paris talk. I must show myself, — must be seen at the club and on the boulevard. Oh, I will return to dine with you !"

He ascended the steps with one bound, joyous and free as a boy leaving school.

"I shall be afraid till the end," said the queen. And

Mérait, who, like her, foresaw all, could not find a word to encourage her.

The king, however, had made strong resolutions. During mass he had sworn not to see Sephora again, feeling certain that if she wished to retain him, if she should clasp her arms closely around his neck, he would not have strength to leave her. With the best faith in the world he was driven to his club, and found a few bald-headed men, — some absorbed in silent games of whist, and others in majestic attitudes were sleeping around the great table in the reading-room. Every thing here was more dead and deserted because people had played a great deal the night before. In the morning, as all the party were leaving, his Highness the Prince d'Axel at their head, a troop of asses had passed before the club, trotting along and braying. His Highness called the driver. They drank warm milk in champagne-glasses. Then these gentlemen, who were somewhat tipsy, getting astride the poor beasts in spite of their kicking and the shouts of the driver, ran the most amusing steeple-chase all along the Rue de la Paix. You should have heard the thrilling account of the stately M. Bonœil, the manager of the Royal Club : —

“Oh, it was so droll ! His Highness on that little ass obliged to draw up his long legs, — for his Highness has fine legs, — and he still kept his imperturbable coolness ! Ah, if your Majesty had been there !”

His Majesty regretted very much having missed this pleasant party of fools. Happy Prince d'Axel ! In trouble with the king, his uncle, — driven from his country by all kinds of court intrigues, — he would never reign, perhaps, since the old monarch intended to be married again, and to a young woman, and would bring a lot of little heirs-presumptive into the world. But all this did

not disturb him in the least. To have a jolly time in Paris seemed to him far more interesting than to give himself up to politics in Illyria. And gradually the chaffing, the sceptical sarcasm, gained the ascendancy with Christian, who was lying on the lounge where the royal prince had left the impress of his contagious caprices. In the idle atmosphere of the club, every thing — the heroic excitement of the evening before, and the morrow's attempt — seemed to the young king to be devoid of glory or grandeur. Positively he would be demoralized were he to remain there ; and, to escape the torpor which was invading him like a stupefying poison in his veins, he arose, and descended into the fresh air among the living.

It was three o'clock, — the hour that he usually went to Messina Avenue, after having breakfasted at the club or with Mignon. Involuntarily his feet followed the usual road in this summer Paris, which was a little larger and less exciting than the other, but which has charming views and shorter perspectives, with verdure massed against rocks, and leafy shadows playing over the white asphalt road.

What pretty women glided along there, half concealed by their parasols, with so much grace, so charmingly *spirituelle*, fascinating, and amiable ! What other women could walk like them, arrange the folds of their drapery with such grace, and talk and dress so well ? Ah, Paris, Paris, city of easy pleasure and short hours ! and to think, that, in order to be surer of leaving it, perhaps he was going to lose his head ! What delightful moments he had enjoyed, however, full of sensuous and perfect pleasure ! In the fervor of his gratitude, the Slavonian's eyes sparkled at all these passers-by, who charmed him with some

feature, or motion of the skirt, with a fanlike train trimmed with lace. There was little resemblance between the chevalier king, who in the morning kneeled between his wife and son in the oratory before setting out to regain his kingdom, and the handsome lady-killer with an eager face, and with the hat of a conqueror on his little, round, frizzly head, and with cheeks flushed by pleasure. Frédérique was not wrong in detesting the excitement of Paris, and fearing its effect on the unsteady brain, which was nothing but froth, like certain wines that do not keep.

At the junction of the Boulevard Haussmann and Messina Avenue, Christian stopped, and waited for several carriages to pass. This was to bring himself to reason. How did he come here, and so quickly? The Hôtel Potnicki, with its two small spires, like those of a Parisian castle, and its *moucharabie* veiled in an alcove, rose up before him. What a temptation! Why should he not go there? why should he not see for the last time the woman who would haunt his life with the memory of unsatisfied longing, the more exciting through disappointment?

Finally, after a moment's terrible debate, which was perfectly apparent in his weak body, which swayed like a reed, he made an heroic decision, jumped into an uncovered carriage which was passing, and gave the address of his club. He would never have had courage to do this, if it had not been for a vow made to God during mass in the morning. To this cowardly soul, which was as devout as that of a Catholic woman, this outweighed every thing.

At the club he found Sephora's letter, and the mere odor of musk in the paper communicated the fever

which was consuming her. The prince brought him the other missive, — a few, hurried imploring phrases, in a handwriting that Tom's books had never known. But here Christian II., being surrounded, sustained, and looked at, felt himself stronger; for he was one of those persons whose attitude is influenced by lookers-on in the gallery. He thrust the letters into the bottom of his pocket. The young men from the club appeared, full of the story about the asses, which had been told at length in the morning paper. The sheet circulated from hand to hand; and, while reading it, they all laughed till they were perfectly exhausted.

“Is there any thing up for this evening?” asked these young noblemen, swallowing soda-water: the club had a whole storehouse of these alterative waters. Led away by their gay spirits, the king was persuaded to go and dine with them at the Café de Londres, and not in one of those *salons* whose familiar hangings had danced before their eyes a dozen times when intoxicated, and whose mirrors bore their names and writings, interlaced like a wintry frost on the window-panes; but in a cellar, one of those charming catacombs extending beneath the theatre of the Opéra Comique, and which is filled with casks and bottles, whose cases are arranged in regular rows with porcelain labels. All the wines of France were buried here. They set the table in the back part, among the sea-green bottles of the Château Yquem, which were lying flat, and gleamed softly, sparkling in the reflection of the gas and girandoles of colored glass. It was an idea of Wattelet, who wished to mark the departure of Christian II. with a novel repast, known to him and the prince alone. But the effect was lost through the dampness of the walls and ceilings, which soon chilled the

guests, who were wearied with the fatigue of the preceding night. Queue de Poule kept falling asleep, and waking with a start. Rigolo talked but little, and laughed or pretended to, drawing out his watch every five minutes. Perhaps he was thinking of the queen, whom this delay would alarm.

At dessert a few women who were in the habit of dining at the Café de Londres appeared, and, knowing the princes were below, left their tables, and, guided by the waiters bearing candlesticks, filed into the cellars, with their skirts over their arms, giving little shrieks as if frightened at their frolic. Almost all were *décolletées*. At the end of five minutes they were coughing, and looked pale, shivering at the side of the gentlemen, who at least were protected by their turned-up collars. "A good joke to give them all a cough," as one of them said, who shivered more, or was less excited, than the others. They decided to go up and take their coffee in the *salons*; and, while they were moving, Christian disappeared. It was not quite nine o'clock. His *coupé* was waiting for him at the door.

"Messina Avenue," he said in a low voice through his closed teeth.

It came over him like a fit of madness. During dinner, he had thought of her alone. Oh, to clasp her in his arms, and be no longer the dupe of her tears and prayers!

"Madame has gone out."

This was like cold water on a brazier. Madame had gone out. One could not doubt it on seeing the disorder of the house, given over to the servants, whose bright ribbons and striped waistcoats Christian saw vanish as he entered. He asked nothing more, and, being suddenly

sobored, measured the bottomless abyss into which he had nearly fallen,—a perjurer before God, and a traitor to the crown ! He held the rosary in his burning fingers, and counted the beads with an *ave* of thanksgiving, while the carriage rolled to Saint Mandé through the fantastic shapes and nightly terrors of the wood.

“The king !” said Elysée, who was watching at the windows, and saw the reflection of two lanterns of the *coupé* as it entered the court-yard. “The king !” It was the first word that had been spoken since dinner. As if by magic, every face brightened, and at the same time tongues were loosed. The queen herself, in spite of her apparent calmness and strength of character, could not restrain a cry of joy. She had feared that every thing was lost,—Christian detained at that woman’s, abandoning his friends, and dishonoring himself forever. And there was no one around her during these three long hours of waiting to whom this thought had not come, and who was not just as anxious, even to little Zara, whom she had kept up, and who, understanding the anguish and tragic meaning of this silence, without venturing one of those cruel, prophetic questions which children speak out so plainly, had taken refuge behind the leaves of a big album, and, at the announcement of the king’s return, suddenly put out his pretty face bathed with the tears that had been silently flowing for an hour. Later, when they questioned him about his great sorrow, he confessed that he was in despair for fear the king would go off without kissing him. Little, loving soul, to whom this young, lively, smiling father seemed like a tall, frolicsome brother,—a charming, big brother,—who worried their mother !

They heard Christian’s quick, hurried voice giving

orders. Then he went up to his room, and five minutes afterwards appeared equipped for the journey in a small hat with a coquettish buckle and blue cord, and with the light, low gaiters of a tourist at the beach, like those in Wattelet's pictures. Under the dandy, however, was seen the monarch, — the authority, the grand air, the ability to appear nobly under all circumstances. He approached the queen, and muttered a few excuses for his delay. Still pale with emotion, she said to him in a very low voice, "If you had not come, I should have gone with Zara to take your place." He knew that she was speaking the truth, and for a moment saw her, with her child in her arms, under the fire of balls, as he saw her in the terrible scene on the balcony of his window, with the little one closing his beautiful eyes, and resigned to death. Without making any reply, he carried Frédérique's hand to his lips with fervor; then, with the impetuous movement of youth, drew her towards him, saying, "Pardon ! pardon !"

Pardon him ! The queen might still have been capable of doing so, but at the door of the *salon* she saw Lebeau, the sly valet, the confidant of his pleasures and treachery, ready to leave with his master; and suddenly a frightful idea came to her while she gently freed herself: "What if he were lying? If he were not to leave !"

Christian divined this, and, turning to Méraut, said, "You will accompany me to the station. Sammy will bring you back."

Then, as the moments were few, he hurried through his farewells, said a pleasant word to each, — to Boscovich to the marchioness, — and took Zara on his knees, and told him about the expedition he was attempting in order to regain his kingdom, charging him never to give the



queen cause for sorrow, and, if he should never see his father again, to remember that he died for his country while doing his duty as a king.

A little speech *à la* Louis XIV., really not badly expressed, which was gravely listened to by the young prince, who was rather disconcerted at the seriousness of these words coming from a mouth about which he had always seen smiles. But Christian was a man of the present moment, excessively changeable and flighty, and was now eager for departure and the chances of the expedition, and more touched than he wished to appear, which made him try to escape very quickly from the emotions of the last moment. He waved a "Farewell! farewell!" to every one, with a low bow to the queen, and went out.

Truly, if Elysée Méraut had not for three years seen the royal home disturbed by Christian's weakness and shameful cowardice, he would not have recognized the Rigolo of the Royal Club in the proud, heroic prince, who, as they rolled rapidly to the Lyons station, acquainted him with his plans and projects, and his political views, which were very broad and sensible.

The tutor, who was always somewhat superstitious in his royalist faith, saw in this a divine intervention, a privilege of caste,—the king always coming to himself at the right moment through the grace of his coronation and hereditary descent; and, without explaining to himself why, this new moral birth of Christian, preceding and presaging the other that was near, caused him an inexpressibly uncomfortable feeling, a haughty jealousy, whose cause he did not wish to analyze. While Lebeau was busy buying the tickets and registering the baggage, they walked up and down the large waiting-room; and,

in the solitude of this departure at night, the king could not help thinking of Sephora, and the tender conversations with her when he escorted her to Saint Lazare. Under the influence of this memory, a woman who was passing attracted his attention ; for she had the same figure, and a trifle of the bold, coquettish step.

Poor Christian ! poor unwilling king !

Here he is at last seated in a car, the door of which Lebeau had just opened, — the public car, in order not to attract suspicion. He throws himself into a corner, in a hurry to have it over, and be off. This slow parting is very painful to him. At the whistle, the train starts, stretches along, and rumbles noisily over the bridges, and passes through the sleeping villages dotted with street-lamps in a row, and rushes out into the broad country.

Christian II. breathes again. He feels strong, saved, protected : he would almost hum if he were alone in the car. But yonder, at the other window, a little shadow buried in black draws itself down, and shrinks back with the evident desire not to attract attention. It is a woman. Young or old, ugly or pretty ? The king — a matter of habit — casts a look towards her. Nothing stirs but the two wings on her little hat, which turn back, looking as if they were about to fold themselves up to sleep.

“She has gone to sleep. Let us do the same.”

He stretches himself out, wraps himself up in a rug, vaguely sees the outlines of trees and bushes mingled together in the shadows thrown by clouds scurrying across a soft sky, and by the signal-posts as the train dashes past them. His heavy eyelids are about to close, when he feels across his face the caress of delicate hair,

and lowered eyes near his, and a breath like violets from lips which murmur close to his, —

“Wicked man ! without saying farewell to me !”

Ten hours later Christian II. awoke to the sound of cannon, and to the blinding light of a beautiful country sun flickering through rustling foliage. He had just been dreaming that he was mounting at the head of his troops, under a hail-storm of shot, the hillock which leads from the port of Ragusa to the citadel. But he found himself lying here motionless, buried in a large bed, hollowed out like a battle-field, with every thing confused in his brain and before his eyes, his bones giving way to delicious fatigue. What had happened? Gradually he saw every thing clearly, and he recollected. He was at Fontainebleau, at the Hôtel du Faisan, opposite the forest whose dense green tops rose up into the blue sky, and the cannon was firing in the artillery exercises ; and the living reality, the visible link between his ideas, — Sephora, — was writing busily with a poor, scratching pen at the eternal secretary which is found only in hotels. She saw the king's admiring, grateful glance in the mirror, and answered — without moving, without turning round — with a tender kiss in her eyes, and with one she tossed him from the tip of her pen. Then she began to write quietly, with a smile in the corner of her seraphic mouth.

“I am sending home a despatch to keep my family from being anxious,” she said, rising to give it to the boy. When he had gone, feeling relieved of anxiety, she opened the window to admit the pale sunlight, which streamed in, in floods like water from a mill-dam. “Heavens ! how beautiful it is !” She then seats herself near her lover, laughing joyously ; for she is wild with pleasure at being in the country, and at the thought of

being able to ramble through the woods this charming day. They had time to do this, as the night-train which had brought them would not carry back Christian till the following night; for Lebeau, continuing his route, was to warn Hezeta and his noblemen that the embarkment was retarded for one day. The enamoured Slavonian would have liked to draw down the curtains on a happiness which he would have had continue till the last hour, till the last moment. But women have higher ideals; and immediately after breakfast a hired landau carried them through splendid avenues bordered by even lawns, and groves of trees in the form of a square, which make the forest open like a park at Versailles before rocks divide it into wild and superb sites. It was the first time they had been out together, and Christian was tasting this brief joy before the terrible morrow of battle and death.

They rolled along under wide arches of verdure, whence fell the leaves in light showers from the motionless beeches, through which shone the distant sun, which with difficulty pierced the heavy mass of foliage where tree towered above tree, and all were of antediluvian growth.

Under this shelter, without other horizon than the profile of a beloved woman, — without other hope, memory, or desire than her caresses, — the poetic nature of the Slavonian expanded. Oh, to live there, both of them, — no one but themselves, — in a little guard-house, with moss and thatch outside, and fitted up inside as a luxurious nest!

He wished to know how long she had loved him, and what impression he made on her the first time. He translated verses of his country for her, rhythmized with

light kisses on her throat and eyes; and she listened, and pretended to understand and answer, her eyelids quivering, heavy from her sleepless night.

Eternal discord in the duet of love! Christian desired to bury himself in solitary places yet unexplored. Sephora would seek famous spots, — the labelled curiosities of the forest, where are small pleasure-gardens; shops with articles in juniper-wood; exhibitors of stones which tremble, and rocks which weep; trees shattered by lightning; and where all the people are sheltered in huts or caves, whence they spring out at the sound of wheels. She hoped to escape by this the wearisome, monotonous song of love; and Christian admired her touching patience in listening to the interminable speeches of these good country-people who have time and to spare for all they do.

At Franchart she wished to draw water from the famous well of the ancient monks, which is so deep that the bucket is nearly twenty minutes in coming up. Christian must have enjoyed all this! Here still another good woman, covered with medals like an old *gendarme*, showed them the beauties of the site, — the ancient sea, on the borders of which the stag was cured. She had told the same story in the same words for so many years, that she imagined she had belonged to the convent, and three hundred years after had visited the sumptuous country-seats of the first Empire.

“It is here, sir and madame, that the great emperor sat in the evening with all his court.” And she pointed to a sand-stone bench, with three or four seats, in the heather. Then she added loftily, “Opposite was the empress with her ladies of honor.”

This bringing imperial pomp to mind among crumbled

rocks, gnarled trees, and dry broom, made Christian feel gloomy.

"Are you coming, Sephora?" he asked. But Sephora was looking at an esplanade, where, according to the *cicerone*, they used to bring the little King of Rome, who, led by his governess, would from a distance hold out his arms to his august parents. This picture of a child-king reminded the King of Illyria of his little Zara, who stood before him in this barren landscape, supported by Frédérique, and looking at him with his great sad eyes, as if to ask him what he was doing there. But it was only a vague reminder, quickly effaced; and they continued their walk under oaks of every size, past hunting rendezvous with glorious names, in the hollows of green valleys, where are cliffs rising above an enclosure of crumbled granite, and sand-pits where pine-trees pushed through the red earth with their strong and projecting roots.

Now they followed a dark alley in impenetrable shade, with deep, damp borders. On each side were rows of trunks, like pillars of a cathedral, forming silent naves, where was heard the step of a squirrel, or the fall of a leaf fluttering down like a flake of gold. A deep sadness came from overhead, from the branches where rested no birds, and which were as empty and sonorous as deserted houses. Christian, who was still in love, as the day advanced, gave depth to his passion by a mournful, melancholy tone. He stated, that, before leaving, he made his will, and described the emotion caused him by the words from beyond the tomb written in the midst of life.

"Yes, it was very tiresome," said Sephora, like some one who is thinking of other things. But he thought

himself so much beloved, he was so accustomed to being so, that he did not notice her absent-mindedness. He even consoled her in advance in case of disaster befalling him, and laid out a plan of life for her : she must sell the hotel, and retire to the country, where she would live with her memories. All this was adorably conceited, *naïve*, and sincere ; for he felt a cold weight at his heart in thinking of his farewell, which he took for presentiments of death. With hands clasped he talked to her in a low voice of a future life. He had on his neck a little medallion of the Virgin, which never left him ; and he took it off for her. You can imagine whether Sephora was happy. Suddenly a camp of artillery, with gray tents standing in a row, light smoke, and unharnessed horses tied up for the night, gave another turn to the king's thoughts. The moving to and fro of men in uniforms on fatigue-duty, all the busy movements in the open air in the glow of sunset, and the inspiring sight of a soldier in camp, awoke the nomadic and warlike instincts of his race.

The carriage, rolling over the velvety carpet of moss in the broad avenue, caused the soldiers, who were busied in arranging their tents or making soup, to raise their heads. They laughed as they saw the *pékin* and his pretty sweetheart pass. Christian looked under the hedges to the end of the camp, and felt a great desire to talk to them, and make a speech. A bugle sounded, and others answered from a distance. Before an officer's tent, a little apart on rising ground, the most beautiful Arabian horse was prancing, with distended nostril and flying mane, and neighing at the warlike sound. The Slavonian's eyes sparkled. Ah ! the fine life he would lead in a few days ! the grand deeds he would perform !

But what a pity that Lebeau, who was on his way to Marseilles, had carried away the baggage ! he would have so liked to have Sephora see him in his lieutenant-general's costume. And, getting excited, he pictured the gates of towns being forced, the republican army routed, and his triumphant entry into Laybach through the streets hung with flags. She should be there. God willing, he would send for her, and establish her in a splendid palace at the gates of the town ; and they would see each other as freely as in Paris. Sephora did not say much in answer to these fine projects. No doubt she would have preferred to keep him wholly to herself ; and Christian admired her for this silent self-sacrifice, which truly raised her to her rank of the king's mistress.

Ah ! how he loved her ! and how quickly passed the evening at the Hôtel de Faisan in their room hung with red ! the light curtains shutting out the sounds and sights of a summer evening in a little town, the few scattered lights, and the chatting of promenaders before the doors, who soon dispersed as the sounds of drums and bugles died away. What kisses, foolish words, and passionate vows were added to those already given ! In a tender and languishing mood they pressed close to each other's hearts, which they could hear beat fast ; while the warm breezes, murmuring through the trees, fluttered their curtains ; and a fountain plashed softly in the little garden of the hotel, as in an Arabian court-yard ; and the flickering light of a lamp in the servants' hall was the only one to be seen.

One o'clock ! He must leave. Christian dreaded the last moment of the parting, believing that he would have to struggle against prayers and caresses ; that he would have to summon all his courage. But Sephora was ready



before him, and wished to accompany him to the station, thinking less of her love than of the honor of her royal lover.

Poor man ! if he could have heard the “ *Ouf !* ” of relief she sighed — the cruel girl — when she remained alone on the road, and saw the two green eyes of the train wind out of sight ; if he could have known how happy she was to return and spend the night alone at the hotel, while, shaken by the jolts of an empty omnibus over the old pavement at Fontainebleau, she said to herself in a deliberate tone, free from all emotion of love, —

“ I hope Tom has done all that is necessary.”

Most certainly what was necessary had been done ; for, on the arrival of the train at Marseilles, Christian II., stepping out of the car with his small valise in his hand, was very much astonished to see a man in a flat cap with silver braid approach him, and beg him very politely to enter his office a moment.

“ What for ? Who are you ? ” asked the king very loftily.

The man with the flat cap replied, —

“ The commissary of *surveillance*.”

In the office Christian found the Prefect of Marseilles, a former journalist, with a red beard, and bright, lively face.

“ I regret to inform your Majesty that your journey must end here,” said the latter, with exquisite politeness. “ My government could not permit a prince, to whom France gives hospitality, to profit by it to conspire and take up arms against a friendly country.”

The king tried to protest ; but the slightest details were known to the prefect.

“ You were to embark at Marseilles ; your companions

at Cette, on a steamer from Jersey. The place of landing was the shore of Gravosa ; the signal, two gun-shots, — one from on board, the other from the land. You see we are well instructed. They are equally so at Ragusa, and I will save you from falling into an ambuscade."

Christian II., who was stunned, wondered who could have given this information, which was known to himself alone, to the queen, Hezeta, and one other whom he certainly was far from suspecting. The prefect smiled in his light beard.

"Come, your Majesty, you must make up your mind. The affair is a failure ; but you will be more fortunate another time, and more prudent too. Now, I beg your Majesty to accept the shelter I offer at the prefecture. Everywhere else you would be exposed to annoying curiosity. The affair is known in the town."

Christian did not answer at once. He looked round at this little government room filled with a green arm-chair, green boxes, a porcelain stove, and large maps with the lines of the trains marked upon them, — a miserably *bourgeois* hole, where his heroic dream and the last echoes of the march of Rodoïtza faded away. It was like a traveller in a balloon, who went up higher than the mountain-tops, and came down almost in the same place he started from, near a peasant's hut, while the poor balloon was collapsed, a bundle of oil-cloth in a stable.

He accepted the invitation, however, and found a truly Parisian home at the house of the prefect, who had a charming wife, a very good musician, who when dinner was over, after a conversation in which all the subjects of the day were passed in review, seated herself at the piano, and turned over lately published pieces of music.

She had a pretty voice, sang very agreeably ; and gradually Christian approached her, and talked music and opera. "The Echoes of Illyria" were lying on a little table between the "Reine de Saba" and the "Jolie Parfumeuse." The prefect asked the king to give him the movement and color of the songs of his country, and Christian hummed a few popular airs : —

*"Beaux yeux, bleus comme un ciel d'été,"* and again *"Jeunes filles qui m'écoutez en tressant des nattes."*

And while, leaning over the piano, pale and fascinating, he was assuming the tone and melancholy *poses* of an exile, yonder on the Illyrian sea, of whose snow-capped waves and clusters of cactus the "Echoes" sang, a fine and enthusiastic band of young men, whom Lebeau had neglected to warn, were, with all sails flying, sailing gayly to death, to the cry of "Long live the king !"

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A PRISONER.

MY DEAR LOVE. — Monsieur de Hezeta and I have just been brought back to the citadel at Ragusa, after a session of ten hours at the Theatre du Corso, where the council of war intrusted with our sentence were sitting. By a unanimous verdict we have been condemned to death.

I must tell you that I like this best. At least we know now what to expect, and are no longer in close confinement. I read your dear letters, and I can write you. This silence was stifling me, besides knowing nothing about you, and my father, and the king, whom I believed had been killed, the victim of some spy. Fortunately his Majesty has come off with no more than a sad disaster and the loss of a few loyal followers. Worse might have happened to us.

The papers have informed you, have they not, how things have gone? Through an incredible fatality, the king's countermand having failed to reach us, at seven o'clock in the evening we found ourselves sailing to the place of rendezvous in the islands. Hezeta and I were on deck, and the others in the cabin, all armed and equipped, with your pretty little cockade in our hats. We crossed in two or three hours. There was nothing in sight but fishing-barks, or those large feluccas which sail along the coast. Night came on, bringing with it a sea-fog, which was very unfortunate for our meeting with Christian II. After waiting a long while, we finally say to each other, that his Majesty's steamer perhaps passed near us without seeing us, and has landed. And just then, from the shore where they were to await our signal, a rocket goes up. That signifies, "Land." There is no more doubt: the king is there, and we all say, "Let us join him."

On account of my knowledge of the country, — I have so often hunted young wild duck on this coast, — I commanded the first

boat, Hezeta the second, and Monsieur de Miremont the third with the Parisians. We were all Illyrians in our boat, and our hearts beat fast. There before us was our country, the black coast looming up in the fog, and which was terminated by a little red light, — the revolving light of Gravosa. The stillness on the shore astonished me, nevertheless. There was no sound save that of the rolling surf, a continuous rattling of wet sea-drift, and none of the bustle which the most cautious crowd makes, among which a clattering of arms, a quick, suppressed breathing, is always heard.

"I see our men!" said San Giorgio, in a low voice, near me.

We perceived, as we sprang ashore, that what we had taken for the king's volunteers were clusters of cactus, and Barbary fig-trees, standing in a row along the shore. I advance. There is no one, only marks of footsteps and hollows in the sand. I say to the marquis, "It is suspicious. Let us go on board again." Unfortunately the Parisians arrived; and how could we keep them away? for they were scattered all over the coast, searching the bushes and thickets. Suddenly a line of fire and a rolling of musketry startle us.

The cry goes up, "Treachery! treachery! Away!" And we hasten to the boats. There was a regular stampede among our men, who huddled together like a herd of frightened cattle, jostling each other, splashing the mud about, and losing their bearing. Then came one moment of ugly panic, lighted by the rising moon, which showed us our English seamen escaping to the steamer as fast as their oars could carry them. But it did not last a great while. Hezeta sprang forward the first, with a revolver in his hand: "Onward! onward!" What a voice! it made the whole beach resound. We throw ourselves behind him, fifty against an army. There was nothing else to do but to die. It is what all our men did with great courage. Pozzo, De Mélida, little De Soris (your lover of last year), and Henri de Trébigne, who shouted to me in the midst of the fray, "Say, Herbert, this needs guzlas!" and Jean de Vélido, who, while fighting, sang "*La Rodoitza*" at the top of his voice, — all fell. I saw them on the beach, lying in the sand, with their faces turned to the sky. And there the waves coming in will bury them, the beautiful dancers of our ball. Less fortunate than our comrades, the marquis and myself — who alone survived that hail of bullets — were taken, blindfolded, and bound, and carried up to Ragusa on mules; your Herbert growling with powerless

rage, while Hezeta, who was very calm, said, "It was fated. I knew it." Strange man! How could he know that we should be betrayed, given over, and received on landing by pointed guns and quantities of grape-shot? And, if he knew it, why did he lead us there? Well, it was a failure,—a game to attempt again with more precautions.

I can understand now by your dear letters, which I cannot weary of reading again and again, why the orders regarding us were delayed, and the reason for these promenades of black robes in the citadel, this bargaining for our lives, these ups and downs and waitings. The wretches were treating us as hostages, hoping that the king, who did not wish to renounce the throne for hundreds of millions, would yield before the sacrifice of two of his followers. And you are angry, my darling, and astonished,—blinded by your tenderness,—because my father did not say a word in favor of his son. But could a Rosen be guilty of such cowardice? He does not love me any the less, poor old man; and my death will be a terrible blow to him. As for our sovereigns, whom you accuse of cruelty, we have not been able to judge them from the high point of view which serves them in governing men. They have duties and rights different from other men. Ah! what fine things Méraut could say to you about this! I feel them, but cannot express them. My jaws are too stiff: every thing remains in my mouth, and will not come out. How many times this has annoyed me before you whom I love so much, and to whom I have never been able to tell it! Even here, separated from you by so many leagues and big bars of iron, the thought of your pretty, gray, Parisian eyes, and your mischievous mouth underneath your little nose, which you puckered up to tease me, intimidates and paralyzes me.

And yet, before leaving you forever, I must make you thoroughly understand for once, that I never loved any one in the world but you; that my life began only on the day that I knew you. Do you remember, Colette? It was in the store in the Rue Royale, at that Tom Levis's. We were supposed to be there by chance. You played a piano, and sang something very lively, which all at once, I don't know why, made me feel as if I wanted to weep. I was smitten, eh? Who would have told us that a marriage in the Parisian style, made by the agency, would become a love-match? And since, in society, wherever it might be, I have met no woman so fascinating as my Colette. So you may be easy:

you are still here with me, though absent. The thought of your pretty face keeps me in good spirits. I laugh all alone to myself when I think of it. It is true you always inspired me with a desire to laugh, though kindly. Still, at this moment, our situation is terrible, especially the manner in which it is put before us. Hezeta and I are in the chapel; that is to say, they have erected an altar for our last mass in the little cell with rough walls, have placed a coffin before each bed, and have hung up placards with the words, "Death, death!" written on them. In spite of all, my room seems lively to me. I escape these funereal threats in thinking of my Colette. And, when I raise myself up to our air-holes, this charming country, — the road which descends from Ragusa to Gravosa, and the aloes and cactus against the sky or the blue sea, — all remind me of our wedding-journey, the Corniche road from Monaco to Monte-Carlo, and the bells of the mules which bore us along in our happiness, that rang out as merrily as they. O my little wife! how pretty you looked, darling traveller with whom I would have journeyed longer!

You see that your image remains and triumphs everywhere, even on the threshold of death, — in death itself: for I wish to keep it in a scapulary on my bosom yonder at the seaport, where they are to take us in a few hours; and it will enable me to fall with a smile on my lips. Therefore, dear, do not grieve too much. Think of the little one; think of our child to be born. Take care of yourself for his sake; and, when he can understand, tell him that I died like a soldier, upright, with two names on my lips, — that of my wife and that of my king.

I would have liked to leave you a *souvenir* of the last moment; but they have stripped me of every jewel, — watch, charms, and pin. I have nothing left but a pair of white gloves, which I intended for my entry into Ragusa. I shall put them on presently in honor of the execution; and the warden of the prison promised me to send them to you when all was over.

Then farewell, my darling Colette! Do not weep, I beg of you, although the tears are blinding me. Console my father. Poor man! he always scolded me because I was late in obeying orders. I shall not come at all now. Farewell! farewell! Yet I had so many things to say to you! But, no: I must die. What a fate! Farewell, Colette!

HERBERT DE ROSEN.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## A DÉNOÛMENT.

"THERE is one way left, sire."

"Speak, my dear Méraut. I am ready for every thing."

Méraut hesitated to answer. What he was going to say appeared to him too grave, and out of place in this billiard-hall, where the king had brought him for a game after breakfast. But the singular irony which presides over the destiny of dethroned sovereigns willed that it should be before the green cloth over which the balls rolled with a sinister and hollow sound in the silence and mourning in the house at Saint Mandé, that the fate of the royal race of Illyria should be decided.

"Well?" asked Christian II., leaning forward to reach the ball.

"Well, your Majesty" —

He waited till the king had made his carrom, which the councillor Boscovich had devoutly scored, before continuing, with a shade of embarrassment, —

"The people of Illyria are like all nations, sire. They like success and strength; and I fear that the fatal result of our last enterprise" —

The king turned round with a blush on his cheeks.

"I asked you for the plain truth, my dear fellow; and it is useless for you to dress it in all these fine phrases."

"Sire, you must abdicate," said the Gascon roughly.

Christian looked at him in amazement.



"Abdicate what? I have nothing. A fine present I should make my son! I believe he would prefer a new velocipede to this vague promise of a crown in his majority."

Mérait cited the example of the Queen of Galicia. She, too, abdicated for her son during exile; and Don Leonce owes his being on the throne to-day to this abdication.

"Eighteen to twelve," said Christian brusquely. "Councillor, you are not scoring."

Boscovich leaped up like a frightened hare, and sprang towards the score; while the king, with body and mind intent, was absorbed in a marvellous "four-cushion."

Elysée looked at him; and his royalist faith was rudely tried before this type of a used-up dandy, with his slender throat very much exposed in his open flannel vest, while his eyes, mouth, and nostrils were still tinged with a jaundice which had kept him in bed nearly a month, and from which he had but just risen. The disaster at Gravosa; the gloomy end of all those young men; the terrible scenes to which the trial of Herbert and Hezeta had given rise in the little court at Saint Mandé; Colette dragging herself on her knees before her former lover to obtain her husband's pardon; those days of anguish and waiting, listening intently to the horrible platoon-firing, which he seemed to command himself; and, besides this, anxiety about money, the first Pichery notes coming due; and that cruelty of an unlucky destiny, — though he still preserved the light-heartedness of the Slavonian, — had physically affected him.

He stopped after his carrom, and, playing the white with the greatest care, asked Mérait, without looking at him, —

"What does the queen say of this project of abdication? Have you spoken to her about it?"

"The queen thinks as I do, sire."

"Ah!" said he dryly, with a slight start.

Strangeness of human nature! This woman, whom he did not love, whose defiant coldness and clear look he feared,—the woman he accused of having treated him too much like a king, whom she bored by constantly reminding him of his duties and prerogatives,—made him angry because she no longer believed in him, and abandoned him in favor of the child. He did not feel wounded in his love, as if he had received one of those blows which strike to the heart, and make one cry out, but felt the chill of a friend's treachery, of lost confidence.

"And you, Boscovich, what do you think of it?" said he quickly, turning to his councillor, whose smooth, anxious face followed convulsively the motions of the master's.

The botanist made pantomimic Italian movements with outstretched arms and lowered head, uttering a "Who knows?" so timid and non-committal, that the king could not help laughing.

"On the opinion of our council, of course," he said mockingly through his nose, "we will abdicate when they wish."

Thereupon his Majesty began to push the balls with ardor to Elysée's great despair, who longed to go and announce to the queen the success of a negotiation which she would not take charge of herself; for this phantom of a king was still held in awe by her, and it was with trembling that she laid her hand on the crown which he no longer wished.

The abdication took place some time after this. The

head of the civil and military service stoically proposed the splendid galleries of the Hôtel de Rosen for this ceremony, to which it is a custom to give as much solemnity and authority as possible. But the disaster at Gravosa was still too recent for the opening of these *salons* that were filled with the echoes of the last *fête* : it would have been too sad, and a bad omen for the future kingdom. They had to content themselves, therefore, with assembling at Saint Mandé a few noble Illyrian or French families whose signature was necessary at the bottom of an act of this importance.

At two o'clock the carriages began to arrive. The bell rang many times in succession while the guests slowly ascended the steps, over which carpeting was spread from the threshold to the bottom. The Duke de Rosen stood at the door of the *salon* to receive them, and wore his close-fitting military uniform, and, among the crosses around his neck, the grand order of Illyria, which he had laid aside without saying a word when he learned the scandal of the wig-maker Biscarat displaying the same badges on his Figaro vest. On his arm and in the guard of his sword the general had a long new piece of crape, and, what was more significant than this crape, was a feeble shaking of his head, an unconscious fashion of always saying, "No, no," which he had shown since the terrible debate in his presence on the subject of Herbert's pardon, — a debate in which he energetically refused to take part, in spite of Colette's prayers and the protest of his fatherly tenderness. It seemed as if his little, shaking, weasel's head bore the sorrow of this inhuman refusal, and that he was condemned henceforth to say "No" to every impression, to every sentiment, and to life itself; every thing being over for him, and nothing having power to interest him after his son's tragic end.

The Princess Colette was there too, wearing her widow's weeds with charming grace ; and the sorrows of her widowhood were mitigated by a mother's hopes. Even in the midst of her very sincere grief, this little creature, with the soul of a *modiste* encumbered with trifles, and which a stern fate had not elevated, found enough to satisfy her, thanks to the child ! in a quantity of coquetish vanities and furbelows. The ribbons, laces, and the splendid *trousseau* which she had embroidered with a cipher, an original design, under her princely crown, served as a diversion to her sadness. The baby would be called Wenceslas or Witold, or Wilhelmina if it were a girl ; but the name should certainly begin with a W, because it is an aristocratic letter, pretty to trace on linen.

She was explaining this to Madame de Silvis, when, after a blow from a halberd, the door was thrown wide open to announce the Prince and Princess de Trébigne, De Soris, the Duke de San Giorgio, the Duchess de Mélida, Counts Pozzo, Miremont, and Véliko. One might have called it a list, uttered in a loud voice and echoed back from the shore covered with blood, of all the young victims who fell at Gravosa. And, worst of all, what was to give the ceremony a fatal, funereal aspect in spite of the precautions taken, — the sumptuous livery and the hangings put up for the occasion, — the guests were also in deep mourning, with black gloves, and dressed in those stiff woollen stuffs so gloomy to the eye, and which restrain a woman's gestures and movements. It was the mourning of old men, of fathers, and mothers, who assumed it with deeper pain and less resignation than the others. Many of these unfortunates were coming out for the first time since the catastrophe, torn from their solitude and their



"The King, gentlemen!" Page 299



seclusion by their devotion to the dynasty. They drew themselves up on entering, and summoned all their courage : but, while looking at one another, they were gloomy mirrors of the same grief ; and as they stood with bowed heads, their shoulders contracted and shuddering, they felt rising to their own eyes the tears they saw in others, and on their own lips the sigh that was with difficulty repressed on those at their side ; and soon a nervous contagion overcame them, and filled the *salon* with a prolonged sob, broken with cries and stifled groans. The old man Rosen was the only one who did not weep ; and, drawing up his tall, inflexible figure, he continued to make the pitiless sign, "No, no : he must die."

In the evening, at the Café de Londres, H.R.H. the Prince d'Axel, who was invited and agreed to come and sign the abdication, told that it seemed to him that he was at a first-class funeral, with all the family united, waiting for the body to be carried out. It is true the prince royal made a sad figure as he entered. He felt chilled and embarrassed by this silence and despair, and looked with terror at all these myths, when he perceived the little Princess de Rosen. He quickly went and took a seat near her, curious to know the heroine of the famous breakfast at Quai d'Orsay ; and while Colette, who was very much flattered at the attention, received his Highness with a mournful, sentimental smile, she little suspected that the veiled and sea-green eyes, as he leaned over her, were taking the exact measure of a baker-boy's costume closely fitting her attractive person.

"The king, gentlemen !"

Christian II., who was very pale and visibly anxious, entered first, holding his son by the hand. The little prince showed a power of command which became him

well, and was increased by the black jacket and the pantaloons which he wore for the first time with a certain pride, a serious grace of adolescence. The queen came afterwards, very beautiful in an elegant mauve dress covered with laces, too sincere to conceal her joy, which shone as bright in the midst of the surrounding gloom as her light dress by the side of the mourning garments. She was so happy, so selfishly happy, that she did not come down a moment to the sublime distress which surrounded her any more than she saw the chilly garden, the mist on the window-panes, and the dark, lowering clouds of All Saints' week scurrying across a sky heavy with fog. The day seemed bright and warm to her ; so true is it that all is in ourselves, and that the outside world is transformed and colored with the thousand shades of our passions.

Christian II. placed himself before the mantle-piece in the middle of the *salon*, having the Count of Zara at his right, and the queen at his left. A little farther on, Boscovich, in the ermine of his Aulic councillor's robe, sat at a little writing-table. Every one being seated, the king spoke very low, to say that he was ready to sign his abdication, and to let his subjects know the motive. Then Boscovich rose, and with his little, sharp, stuttering voice, read Christian's manifesto to the nation,—the rapid history, with brilliant passages, of the early hopes of the kingdom, the disappointments and misunderstandings that followed, and, finally, the king's resolution to withdraw from public affairs, and to trust his son to the generosity of the Illyrian people. This short letter, in which Elysée's pen left its mark, was so poorly read, like a wearisome nomenclature in botany, that it allowed one to reflect and to seize all there was that was vain and open to derision in this abdication of an exiled



sovereign, this transmission of power which did not exist, and rights denied and unrecognized. The act itself, read afterwards by the king, was framed thus : —

“I, Christian II., King of Illyria and Dalmatia, Grand Duke of Bosnia and Herzegovinia, &c., declare, that of my own free will, and without yielding to any foreign pressure, I bequeath and convey to my son Charles Alexis Leopold, Count of Goetz and Zara, all my political rights ; reserving only my civil rights over him as a father and guardian.”

Immediately, at a sign from the Duke de Rosen, all the by-standers approached the table to sign. For some moments there was a commotion, a rustling of dresses, with long waits and pauses caused by the ceremony, during which one heard a scratching of guided and trembling pens. Then the hand-kissing began.

Christian II. led off the march, and, acquitting himself of that difficult duty, the homage of a father to his child, kissed the end of his delicate fingers with more airy grace than respect. The queen, on the contrary, kissed with a passionate, almost religious, outburst : the protectress and mother became the humble subject. After this, it was Prince d'Axel's turn ; then came all the great lords, who filed by in order of rank, which the little king began to think very tedious, notwithstanding the charming dignity revealed in his honest eyes and extended hand, which was small and white, and strongly veined, with the square nails of a child who still keeps at play, with wrists rather strong and out of proportion, because of his quick growth. These noblemen, although gloomily absorbed in their sorrow, considered the occasion of so much moment, that they were not inclined to lose their turn, which was reserved for them according to

their title and the number of jewels in their crown : therefore, as Méraut was hastening to his pupil, he suddenly stopped on hearing a "*Monsieur, s'il vous plaît,*" which made him draw back, and brought him face to face with the indignant Prince de Trébigne, a terribly asthmatic old man, who could hardly breathe ; and whose eyes were dilated, and as round as a ball, as if he breathed only through them. Elysée, who worshipped tradition, moved aside respectfully to allow this wreck of the tomb to pass, and was the last to take part in the hand-kissing. As he was withdrawing, Frédérique, who was standing near her son, as one sees the mothers of brides standing in the vestry to receive the last words of homage and the last smiles, said to him in a low voice, and exultant, nervous manner, as he passed, —

"It is done !"

She said this in a tone of indescribable relief, and a fulness of joy that was almost wild.

"It is done !" that is, the diadem was saved from trade and disgrace. She could now sleep, breathe, and live, relieved of the continual anxiety which forewarned her of catastrophes, and which might have enabled her to say, as Hezeta said at every fatal *dénoûment*, "I knew it !" Her son would not be dethroned : he would be a king. A king ! He was a king already in his majestic bearing, and his cordial but haughty kindness.

But, when the ceremony was concluded, the child-nature gained the ascendancy, and Leopold V. sprang joyously towards the elder Jean de Véliko to tell him the great news.

"Do you know, godfather, I have a pony — a pretty little pony — all to myself ? The general, and mamma too, will teach me to mount."

People gathered eagerly around him, bowing with looks of adoration ; while Christian, who was somewhat alone, had a strange, indefinable feeling, like a light, chilly sensation about his head, where the crown had rested. Positively he was becoming giddy. Yet he had longed for this hour, and cursed the responsibilities of his situation more than another would have done. Then why was he so uncomfortable and sad, now that he saw the shore recede from him, and the road open into new perspectives?

“ Ah, well, my poor Christian ! I think they must have given you your *ouistiti*,” said Prince d’Axel, who, in a low voice, was consoling him in his own way. “ You are in luck. How happy I should be if as much came to me, — if I were spared the necessity of leaving this beautiful Paris to go and reign over my people of seals with white bellies.”

He continued in the same strain for a moment : then, profiting by the confusion and inattention of the company, both disappeared. The queen saw them go out, and heard the phaeton, whose light wheels once never went by without passing over her heart, roll through the court-yard.

But what mattered it to her now ? It was no longer the King of Illyria whom those Parisian women were taking from her.

The day after the affair at Gravosa, Christian, in the first moment of his shame, swore not to see Sephora again. While he was in bed, and afraid of sickness, as a Southerner always is, he only thought of his mistress to curse her, and to blame her morally for his faults. But when convalescent, and his blood was livelier, complete idleness, in which memory mingled with fancies has so

much power, changed his mood. He excused the woman, though timidly at first, and saw only a fatality in what had happened, — one of the thousand designs of Providence, on whom Catholics lay every responsibility that wearies them. One day he ventured at last to ask Lebeau if any news had been received from the countess. For answer the valet brought a quantity of notes which had come during his sickness, — tender, ardent, timid *billets-doux*, — a flock of white turtle-doves cooing her love to him. Christian's ardor was kindled by them ; and he immediately answered them in his bed, impatient to resume, as soon as he was well, the romance interrupted at Fontainebleau.

Meanwhile, J. Tom Levis and his wife were spending a pleasant vacation in their hotel in Messina Avenue. The foreigners' agent could not longer endure the *ennui* of his retirement at Courbevoie. He missed a business-life and trade, and especially Sephora's admiration. In short, he was afflicted with jealousy, — a ferocious, stinging, persistent jealousy, — like a stoppage in the throat which one believes has gone, but which all at once gives one a sharp prick. And he had not the privilege of complaining, and saying to some one, whoever it might be, "Just look, and see what is in my throat."

Unfortunately Tom Levis was caught in his own trap, and was the victim, as well as the inventor, of the great scheme. Sephora's journey to Fontainebleau disturbed him more than all. He tried several times to return to the subject ; but she checked him with a most natural laugh.

"What is the matter with you, my poor Tom? What a face !"

Then he was obliged to laugh also, understanding that there could be nothing between them but fun and hoax-

ing, and that Sephora's fancy, which was that of a girl for a *queue-rouge*, would quickly die out if she believed him jealous, sentimental, or "*canulant*," like the rest; but at heart he suffered, and became weary of living away from her, and even wrote verses about her. Yes, the man in the cab, the imaginative Narcissus, found this relief from his anxiety, — a poem to Sephora, one of those odd efforts of pretentious ignorance, such as they confiscate at Mazas from the table of those confined there. Positively, if Christian II. had not fallen ill, J. Tom Levis would have become so.

I leave you to think of the joy that the buffoon and his dear one felt on meeting again, and living together a few weeks. Tom danced the maddest jigs, cut the queerest figures on the carpet. One would have taken him for a monkey in a happy mood, an Auriol set free to gambol about the house. Sephora was convulsed with laughter, though rather embarrassed on account of the servants, with whom "Madame's husband" was in extreme disfavor. The steward declared, that, if "Madame's husband" were to eat at table, he would never consent to serve him; and as he was an exceptional steward, obtained and chosen by the king, she did not insist, but had her meals sent up to her boudoir by the *femme-de-chambre*. And, when there was a call from Wattelet or Prince d'Axel, J. Tom disappeared in a dressing-room. A husband was never seen at such a time; but he adored his wife, and had her all alone to himself amid surroundings that made her appear infinitely prettier. He was, in short, the happiest of the party, whom the delays and backward payments began to fill with some anxiety. They felt that there was a difficulty, a drawback to the affair which started so well. The king

paid none of the notes that were due, and constantly made new ones, to the great horror of Pichery and father Leemans. Lebeau tried to encourage them: "Patience, patience. He will come to it: it is predestined." But he furnished nothing, and the rest piled reams of Illyrian paper into their portfolios. The poor "father," who no longer had his immovable assurance, went to the Rue de Messina every morning to see his daughter and son-in-law, and to strengthen his courage.

"Then you think that we shall succeed?" he asked, and resigned himself to pay out more money, and to keep paying it out; since the only way to keep track of his money was to send more after it.

One afternoon the countess, while dressing to go to the *Bois*, flitted to and fro from her chamber to her dressing-room under the paternal eye of J. Tom, who, with a cigar between his teeth, was lolling in an easy chair, enjoying the pleasing sight of a woman making her toilet, putting on her gloves before the Psyche, and trying her carriage *poses*. She was charming with her hat on, and her veil coming just to her eyes, and dressed in an autumn suit, which was rather heavy and wintry looking; and the clinking of her bracelets, the jingling of jet on her mantle, responded to the luxurious sounds from the carriage waiting beneath her windows,—the clattering of the harness, the stamping of the horses, all belonging to the establishment and bearing the arms of Illyria. She was to take Tom with her, and drive around the lake, in the first Parisian day of the season, under the low sky, which sets off new fashions so finely, and faces that look rested after a long stay out of town. Tom, who was gotten up in very elegant style, like a real English swell, was delighted with the idea of having a little

pleasure on the sly in this drive in the coupé, screened from view, by the side of his pretty countess.

Madame is ready, and they are about to start. She gives a last look in the mirror. Let us go. But suddenly the lower-hall door opens, and the bell is rung hurriedly. "The king!" While the husband runs into the dressing-room, with his eyes revolving in a terrible manner, Sephora hastens to the window just in time to see Christian II. spring up the steps with the air of a conqueror. He soars as though borne along on wings. "How happy she will be!" he says to himself as he ascends.

The lovely woman understands that something new has happened, and prepares herself. As a beginning, she gives a cry of surprise and joyous emotion when she sees him, falls into his arms, and allows him to support her to a *causeuse*, before which he kneels.

"Yes: I! it is I, and forever."

She looks at him with eyes dilated, and excited with love and hope; and he, immersed, absorbed, in this look:—

"It is done. There is no longer a king of Illyria, only a man who wishes to pass his life in loving you."

"It is too beautiful. I don't dare believe it."

"There! read that."

She took the parchment, and unfolded it slowly.

"Then, it is true, my Christian, you have renounced?"

"Better than that."

And, while she ran over the wording of the act of renunciation, he stood twirling his mustache, looking at Sephora with a triumphant expression. Then, finding that she was slow to understand, he explained to her the difference between renouncing and abdicating; and that he would be quite as free, relieved from duties and

responsibilities, without in any way pledging his son's future. Only the money — But they did not need so many millions to be happy.

She read no more, and listened to him with a bitter smile, showing her pretty teeth ; for she opened her mouth wide, as if the better to seize what he was saying. She understood, however, — oh, yes ! saw very plainly the crumbling away of all their ambition, and the piles of louis already put in the affair ; Leemans's and Pichery's anger, and that of the party cheated by the false dealing of this simpleton. She thought of the many useless sacrifices she had made, of her dreadful life the past six months, when she was heart-sick of dissimulation and inanity ; of her poor Tom holding his breath in the dressing-room, while the other opposite her was awaiting an outburst of tenderness, sure of being loved, a conqueror, irresistible and crushing. It was so droll, and the irony so real and fierce, that she rose, bursting into uncontrollable laughter, — insulting, mocking laughter, — which sent a rapid flush to her face, the dregs of her gross nature being stirred ; and passing before Christian, who was stunned, she cried, “ Fool, begone ! ” then ran, and locked herself in her room.

Without a sou, crown, wife, or mistress, Christian made a singular figure as he descended the stairs.



## CHAPTER XV.

## THE LITTLE KING.

O MAGIC of words ! As if there were cabalistic power in the four letters of the word "king," Méraut's pupil was transformed as soon as he was no longer called Count Zara, but Leopold V. The child, who was industrious and happy in well-doing, and as pliable as a piece of soft wax, but without any superiority of intelligence, was developing gradually, roused by a singular excitement, while his body was strengthened by inward fire. His natural idleness and desire to recline in an arm-chair while they read to him or told him stories, his need to listen and live on the thoughts of others, was changed into an activity which the games of his age no longer satisfied. Old General de Rosen, who was crippled and bent, had to recover strength enough to give him lessons in fencing, shooting, and horsemanship ; and nothing was more touching than to see every morning at nine o'clock, in a clearing in the park, which was enlarged into an arena, the quondam pandour, in a blue coat and with a whip in his hand, fulfilling the functions of a rider with the air of an old Franconi, always respectful to the king while correcting the blunders of the pupil.

The little Leopold trotted and galloped, looking serious and proud, paying attention to the slightest orders ; while the queen looked on from the steps, uttering a remark now and then, or a word of advice. " Sit up

straight, sire," "Give him his rein;" and sometimes, to make herself better understood, she would mount herself, and add example to her words. How happy she was on the day when, her mare keeping step with the prince's pony, both ventured into the neighboring wood, the figure of the horsewoman rising above that of the child! and, far from feeling a mother's fear, she pointed out the road to her son, and, spurring the beasts into a vigorous bound, raced with him as far as Joinville.

There was a change in her, too, since the abdication. With her superstitious faith in divine right, she believed that henceforth the title of king would protect the child and defend him. Her tenderness, which was still as strong and deep, was no longer manifested in maternal ways in caresses; and, although she still went into his chamber at night, it was no longer to see Zara put to bed, and to tuck up his bedclothes. A *valet-de-chambre* had charge of all this now, as if Frédérique feared to make her son effeminate, and to dwarf his power as a man by keeping him in her too tender hands. She came only to hear him say that beautiful prayer from the "Book for Kings" which Father Alphée taught him:—

"O Lord, who art my God! you have placed your servant on the throne; but I am a child that does not know how to guide himself, yet has charge of the people you have chosen. Give me, therefore, wisdom and intelligence."

The little voice of the prince rang out firm and clear with a tone of authority and conviction, that was touching when one thought of his exile in this wretched suburb, and the hypothetical throne far beyond the seas. But her Leopold already reigned in Frédérique's belief; and in her evening kiss there was such devout pride, and indefinable adoration and respect, that Elysée, sur-

prised at these mingled maternal sentiments, was reminded of former Christmas days in his country, where the Virgin sings, while rocking Jesus in the stable, "I am your servant, and you are my God."

Several months passed thus, — an entire winter season, — during which the queen found but one shadow over her joy, — in her heaven which at last was serene. And Méraut unconsciously was the cause. Both having had the same dream, their eyes and souls meeting, and having walked close by each other's side to the same goal, they had established between themselves a common thought and life, which all at once embarrassed Frédérique, without her being able to define the reason. When alone with him, she no longer abandoned herself as formerly, and was frightened at the place which this stranger held in her most private resolves. Did she divine the sentiments which agitated him, the ardor growing so near her, increasing and becoming more dangerous day by day? A woman does not mistake. She would have liked to shield and recover herself; but how? In her trouble she had recourse to the guide and council to whom every Catholic wife appeals, — her confessor.

Father Alphée always guided the queen when he was not running round the country to promulgate royalist principles. One would know the man by looking at him. In this Illyrian priest with a corsair face there was the blood, the bearing, the facial lines, of one of those *Uscoques*, — birds of rapine and tempests, the rovers of the Latin seas. A son of a fisherman in the port of Zara, brought up as a sailor, surrounded by nets and tar, he was taken up by the Franciscans for his pretty voice; and from a sailor-boy he became a chorister, grew up at the

convent, and was one of the leaders of the congregation. But there remained a sailor's ardor with the sea-tan, which the coolness of the cloistral stones had never been able to bleach. But this monk was neither a bigot nor over-scrupulous, and could do his part with a knife ; and, when politics made him short of time, would despatch in one lump at morning the prayers for the day, and even those for the next day, "to get ahead," he would say seriously. Devoted in his affections as in his hatred, he vowed an unlimited admiration for the tutor introduced by him into the house. Therefore at the first avowal of the queen about her troubles and scruples, he feigned not to understand ; then, seeing that she insisted, he was carried beside himself, and spoke severely to her, as to an ordinary penitent, — to a wealthy lace-maker of Ragusa.

Was she not ashamed to mix up such childishness with so noble a cause? Of what did she complain? Had she ever been treated with lack of respect? You see, for such foolish religious notions, or the coquetry of a woman who thinks herself irresistible, she would deprive herself of this man, whom God had certainly placed in their way to make the cause of royalty triumph. And in his seaman's language — his Italian emphasis, which was softened by a sly, priestly smile — he added that one does not find fault with a good wind sent by heaven : one spreads sail, and speeds along.

The most upright woman will always be weak before such specious reasoning. Conquered by the monk's casuistry, Frédérique said to herself that she could not deprive herself of such an auxiliary in the cause of her son. It was her place to guard herself, and keep strong. What did she risk? She even succeeded in persuading

herself that she was mistaken in Elysée's devotion and enthusiastic friendship. But the truth was, he loved her passionately, with a love that was singular and deep, which he banished many a time, but which came slowly back through by-paths, and at last settled down upon him with the invading despotism of a victory. Till now Elysée Méraut believed himself incapable of a tender sentiment. Sometimes, while making royalist speeches in the quarter, some Bohemian girl, without understanding a word of his discourse, would fall madly in love with him for the music of his voice, and for the light in his flashing eyes, and his intellectual brow, —the magnetic attraction of a Magdalen for the apostles. He would lean over smiling, receive what was offered, concealing with gentleness and light affability the ineradicable contempt for women which is at the bottom of every Southerner's nature. Love would have to pass through his strong head to reach his heart ; and it was thus that his admiration for Frédérique's haughty type, and proud endurance of patrician adversity, had become after a while — by living in the same house in the narrow life of exile, and being brought together every hour and moment through so much trouble shared together — a real passion, but a humble, discreet one, utterly hopeless, content to burn at a distance, like a poor man's candle on the lower step of the altar.

Life went on, however, indifferent to these silent dramas ; and the first days of September drew near. The queen took her usual after-breakfast walk in the beautiful sunlight, which was in harmony with her happy state of mind. She was followed by the duke, Elysée, and Madame de Silvis, who filled the place of maid of honor, as the little princess had been dismissed. All her court

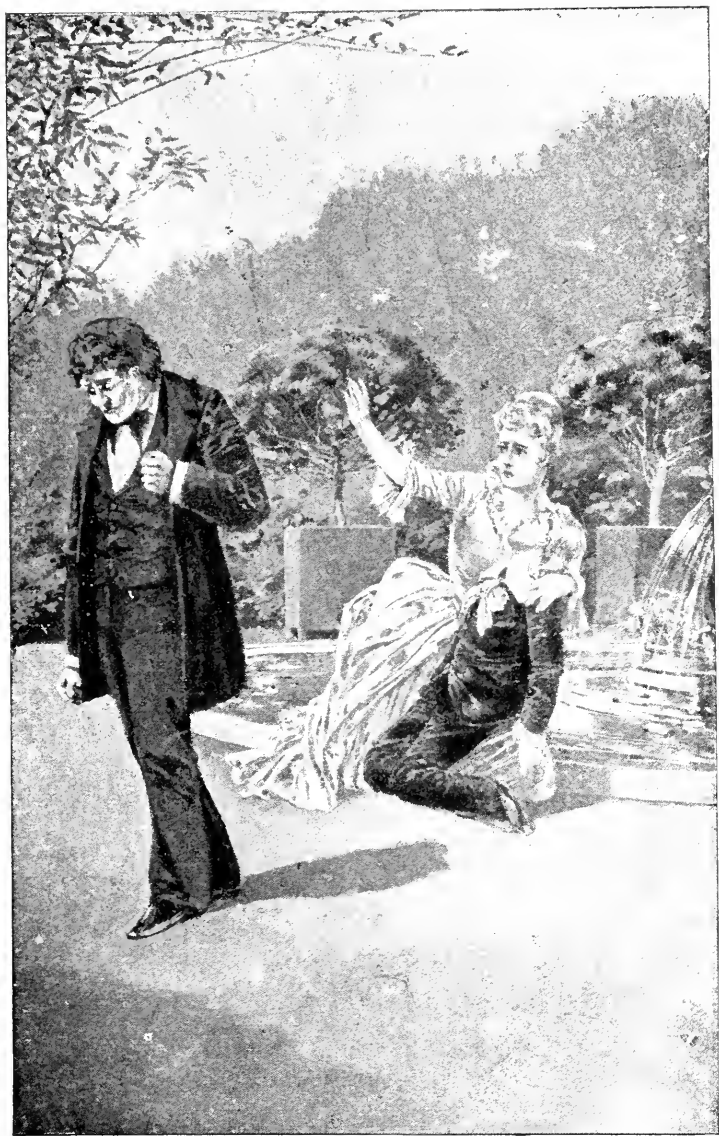
followed her through the shady paths bordered with ivy like a little English park. She would turn round to speak a word or sentence with that marked grace which did not detract from her feminine charms. This day she was particularly lively and gay. In the morning she had received news from Illyria, telling of the excellent effect produced by the abdication, and the name of Leopold V., which was already popular in country-places.

Elysée Méraut triumphed.

"As I told you, Duke, they are raving over their little king. Childhood, you see, regenerates every one's tenderness. It is like a new religion we have infused in them, — a religion full of *naïveté* and fervor."

And, tossing his long hair with both hands with a violent gesture peculiar to himself, he went into one of those eloquent improvisations which transfigured him, as the dejected Arab, crouching in rags on the ground, becomes unrecognizable as soon as he is on a horse.

"Here we are," said the marchioness, in a low voice, with a wearied air; while the queen, in order to hear better, seated herself on the border of a path in the shade of a weeping-ash. The others stood respectfully round her; but gradually the audience thinned. Madame de Silvis withdrew first, ostensibly to protest, as she never failed to do; then they came for the duke, who was called away by some duty. The queen was left alone with Elysée, who did not perceive it, but continued his discourse standing in the sunshine, which fell softly on his noble, exalted face, as on the flat surface of a hard rock. He was handsome thus, with the beauty of intelligence and an irresistible power, which struck Frédérique too suddenly for her to be able to conceal her admiration. Did he see this in her green eyes? Did he receive the



"Begone! begone! May I never see thee again!" Page 318.





shock which we feel when too lively a sentiment is brought near to us? At first he stammered, then stopped short, all in a tremble, and let fall on the queen's head, which was bowed, and on her golden hair flecked with flickering sunlight, a lingering look that was ardent as a declaration.

Frédérique felt the fire from his eyes sweep over her more blinding and scorching than the sun itself; but she had not strength to turn from it. And when, frightened at what was rising to his lips, Elysée rushed from her suddenly, she was so filled with his magnetic power, that it seemed to her as if life were going from her; and she had a kind of moral swoon, and remained on the bench fainting and overpowered. Purple shadows floated over the winding paths. The water rippled from the fountain with a refreshing sound this beautiful summer afternoon. In the garden, which was all in bloom, only the murmur of fluttering wings of tiny insects was heard above the fragrant flower-baskets, and the sharp sound of the little prince's rifle, who was firing at the end of the park, near the wood.

The queen came to herself in this calmness, at first feeling angry and rebellious; for she felt hurt and insulted by that look. Was it possible? Was she not dreaming? She, the proud Frédérique, who in the intoxication of court *fêtes* formerly disdained the homage laid at her feet, though by the most noble and most illustrious, — she who kept her proud heart above it, to abandon it to a nobody, a son of the people! Tears of pride burned in her eyes. And through her confused thoughts a prophetic word of the elder Rosen rang in her ears: "The Bohemia of exile." Yes! only exile, with its demoralizing, free intercourse, could have made this subaltern dare. But, as she

poured out her scorn upon him, the remembrance of the services he rendered her came back to her mind. What would have become of them without him? She remembered the emotion of their first meeting, and how his words revived her. Then, while the king was away seeking his pleasure, who had taken the guidance of their destiny, and repaired their blunders and crimes? And his indefatigable, daily devotion, so much talent and spirit and fine genius applied to a self-sacrificing task, without profit or glory! The result was this little king, — a real king, and the future ruler of Illyria, of whom she felt so proud. Then, overcome with an unconquerable feeling of tenderness and gratitude, and recollecting that moment in the past when at the *fête* at Vincennes she leaned on Elysée's strong shoulder, she closed her eyes as on that day, and gave herself up to the blissful thought of the great, devoted heart which she seemed to feel beating near her.

Suddenly, after a gun-shot which sent the birds flying through the foliage, she heard a loud cry, — a child's cry, — such as mothers hear in their dreams during troubled nights of anxiety, — a terrible call of distress, which darkened the whole sky, enlarging and changing the garden into an immense scene of sorrow. Hurried steps were heard in the paths. The voice of the tutor, hoarse and changed, was heard calling beyond, near the firing. Frédérique reached the place with one bound.

It was in the cool shade of the hedge, in a part of the park that was covered with hops and climbing vines, and the rank growth of the rich earth. Sheets of paste-board, pierced with small, regular, and cruel holes, hung from the trellis. Frédérique saw her child lying motionless on his back on the ground, his face white, with

a red spot near the right eye, which was closed and wounded, and from which a few drops of blood were trickling like tears. Elysée was on his knees near him, calling, and wringing his hands. "It was I ! it was I !" He was passing. His Highness wished him to try his arms ; and, through a frightful fatality, the ball, rebounding from the iron-work on the trellis —

But the queen would not listen to him. Without uttering a cry or complaint, filled only with the protecting instinct of a mother, she seized the child, and carried him in her arms to the pond. Then, motioning away the servants of the house who gathered around to help her, she leaned her knee on the stone brink on which the little king's inert body was lying, held the beloved pale face to which the fair hair was clinging — a gloomy sight — under the basin ; and there was a trickling stream reaching to the bluish eyelid, and a dark red spot where it had been bathed with water, and from between the lids a very small stream was issuing redder still.

The queen did not speak : she did not even think. In her cambric dress, which was crumpled and wet, and which clung to her beautiful form as to a marble naiad, she leaned over her little one, watching him closely. What a moment of agonized waiting ! Gradually reviving by the immersion, the wounded boy started, stretched his limbs as one does in waking, and immediately began to groan.

"He lives !" cried the mother with delirious joy.

Then, raising her head, she saw opposite her Méraut, whose paleness and dejection seemed to ask pardon.

The recollection of what had passed on the bench recurred to her, mingled with the terrible surprise of the catastrophe ; and she recalled her weakness so quickly

visited on the head of the child, and was filled with rage against this man and herself.

“Begone ! begone ! May I never see thee again !” she cried, with a terrible look. It was her love she was confessing before every one to punish herself, and to cure herself, — her love, which she flung in his face like an insult in the insolence of that word “thee.”

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE DARKENED ROOM.

"ONCE upon a time, in the duchy of Oldenburg, there was a Countess of Ponikau, to whom the dwarfs on her wedding-day gave three little golden loaves."

Madame de Silvis was repeating this in a darkened room, where the windows were tightly closed, and the curtains drawn over them, and hanging to the floor. The little king was lying on his bed ; and the queen sat near him like a white phantom, applying ice to the forehead covered with a bandage, which she had renewed every few minutes night and day for a whole week. How has she lived without sleeping, and almost without eating, seated on the narrow edge of the bed, her hands holding those of her son in the intervals between the bandaging, and passing from the coldness of the ice to the fever she is watching, and which she dreads as she feels it in the sick boy's feeble pulse ?

The little king wishes his mother to remain there always. The darkness of this great room is peopled to him with gloomy shadows and terrifying visions. Then the impossibility of reading or touching a plaything keeps him in a stupor, which makes *Frédérique* anxious.

"Are you suffering?" she asks every moment.

"No : I am weary," answers the child in a weak voice. And to drive away this weariness, to people the sad atmosphere of the room with brilliant visions, Madame

de Silvis has begun to draw from her stock of fanciful tales, full of old German castles, and goblins dancing at the foot of the tower where the princess is waiting for the bluebird and twirling her glass distaff.

While listening to these endless stories, the queen despairs. It seems to her that they are undoing the work she has done with so much pains ; that she is witnessing the crumbling away, stone by stone, of an upright, triumphant column. It is that which she sees in the darkness before her, in the long hours of seclusion, when she is much more disturbed at having her boy fall into a woman's hands again, and once more becoming the feeble little Zara, than at the wound itself, whose dangerous character she does not yet know to its full extent. When the doctor, with a lamp in his hand, for a moment disperses the accumulated veils of shade, raises the bandage, and with a drop of atropia tries to awaken the sensibility of the injured eye, the mother is re-assured on seeing that the little one does not give a cry, or hold out his arms to protect himself. No one dares tell her, that, on the contrary, this insensibility and stillness of all the nerves is the death of the organ. The ball in rebounding, although its force was spent, could still injure and loosen the retina. The right eye is irrevocably destroyed. Every precaution that they may take can only tend to preserve the other, which is threatened by that sympathy of parts which makes sight a single organ with double branches. Ah ! if the extent of her misfortune was known by the queen, who so firmly believes, that, thanks to her care and vigilant tenderness, the accident will leave no trace, and who already talks to the child about the first time they will go out !

“ Leopold, shall you be glad to take a fine walk in the forest ? ”

Yes : Leopold will be very happy to. He wishes they would take him to that *fête* he went to once with his mother and the tutor. And, suddenly interrupting himself, he asked, —

“Where is Monsieur Elysée? Why does he never come to see me?”

They answer that his teacher has gone on a long journey. This explanation suffices. Thinking fatigues him, and talking also ; and he falls back into his silent indifference, returns to the land of visions which sick people evoke while blending their surroundings with their dreams and the motionless aspect of things, for they fear motion and sound for him.

People come in and go out treading cautiously, and answer in whispers. The queen hears nothing, and pays attention only to the bandaging. Sometimes Christian pushes open the door, which is always ajar on account of the heat of this seclusion, and, in a voice which he tries to make joyous and careless, comes to say some amiable nonsense to his son to make him laugh or talk. But his voice has a false ring since the recent catastrophe, and the father frightens the child. His little memory, which the gun-shot filled with the confusion of its smoke, retains some dominant feature of the late scenes, — the despairing attempts of the queen, the shock he felt when she came near falling with him down three stories. He answers in a low voice, through closed teeth. Then Christian addresses his wife : —

“You should rest a little, Frédérique : it is for the child’s interest for you to do so ; for you are killing yourself.”

But the hand of the prince presses, that of his mother in an imploring grasp, and she re-assures him with the same mute eloquence : —

“No, no : do not be afraid. I will not leave you.”

She coldly exchanges a few words with her husband ; then leaves him to his dismal reflections.

The accident to his son completes a gloomy series for Christian. He feels himself alone in the world, in despair and subdued. Ah, if his wife would take him back again ! He feels the need of the weak, — to draw close to some one in misfortune, to place his head on a friendly bosom, to find relief in tears and confessions, and then to return to new amusements and new treachery. But Frédérique’s heart is forever lost to him ; and now the child, in his turn, avoids his caresses. He tells himself this as he stands at the foot of the bed in the dark room ; while the queen, watching the minutes, takes the ice in a cup, and places it on the wet bandage, and raises and kisses the little sick brow to see if it is warm ; while Madame de Silvis gravely relates the story of the three little golden loaves to the legitimate sovereign of the kingdoms of Illyria and Dalmatia. Christian leaves the room, his exit being unobserved as his entrance, and wanders in a melancholy mood through the silent house, which is kept in the same order and ceremonious style as usual by the Duke de Rosen, who is seen going and coming from the hotel to the servants’ quarters and intendant’s house holding himself erect, and shaking his head. The hot-house and garden continue to bloom ; and the *ouistitis*, enlivened by the heat, fill their cage with little cries and gambols. The prince’s pony, led by the groom, takes a hundred steps in the court-yard, which is deadened with a layer of straw, stops at the steps, and turns his little hazel eyes sadly towards the place where the little king used to come down. The hotel still has an elegant, comfortable appearance ; but it seems as if one were waiting and hoping for



something, and there is a feeling of suspense in the air, a silence like that which follows a storm. The most impressive sight is the three blinds above, which are closely fastened even when every thing is thrown open to admit the air and light, and which shut in the mystery of pain and sickness.

Mérait, driven from the royal house, takes lodgings quite near, and constantly wanders around it, and looks in despair at the closed windows. It is his torment and punishment. He returns every day with the fear of finding them all open some morning letting out the smoke from an extinguished candle. The *habitués* of this part of Saint Mandé know him well. The woman selling pastry-cakes, sounding her castanets when this tall, unhappy-looking fellow passes, the man tossing balls, and the employé in the railroad-station shut up in his little wooden building, all consider him a little crazy ; and truly his despair is turning to a mania. But it is not the lover who suffers. The queen did well to drive him away : he deserved it ; and his passion vanished before the great disaster to his hopes. To have dreamed of making a king, having given himself that superb task, and then to crush and destroy every thing with his own hands ! The father and mother, whose affection had received the heaviest blow, were in no greater despair than he. He had not even the consolation of giving his care and showing his solicitude every hour, and could hardly obtain news, the servants owing him a grudge on account of the accident. However, a brigadier of the forest, having access to the house, told him the rumors among the servants, enlarged upon by that love of the horrible which the common people possess. Sometimes they declared the little king was blind, and sometimes he was delirious ;

and they said the queen had decided to let him die of hunger. And the sad Elysée lived a whole day on these discouraging reports ; and wandered through the woods as long as his limbs would bear him, then returned and watched at the outskirts in the tall, flowery grass, which was trodden down on Sundays by promenaders, — a real rural spot, but deserted during the week.

Once at nightfall he threw himself down in the cool meadow, with his eyes towards the house, where the lights were screened by the interlaced branches. The jugglers were going away, and the guards were beginning their evening rounds, and the swallows were flying around in a large circle above the tallest grass in the pursuit of gnats which came down at sunset. It was a melancholy hour. Elysée was influenced by it. Weary in mind and body, he listened to his memory and anxieties, as it happens in the silence of nature, where our inward struggles try to make themselves heard. Suddenly his eyes, which were looking at nothing, saw before him the uneven step, Quaker hat, white waistcoat, and gaiters of Boscovich. The councillor was moving rapidly away with mincing steps, like a woman, looking very much agitated, and holding carefully in his hand an object wrapped up in his handkerchief. He did not seem surprised on seeing Elysée, and accosted him in the most natural tone and manner, as if nothing had happened : —

“ My dear Méraut, you see a very happy man.”

“ Ah, my God ! what is it ? Is his Highness’s condition ” —

The botanist assumed a look for the occasion to say that his Highness was getting on just the same, always quiet, the room still darkened, and the same sad uncertainty ; oh ! very sad. Then he said suddenly, —

"Guess what I have here. Take care ! It is fragile : you will loosen the earth. A foot of clematis, — not the common clematis of your garden, but *Clematis Dalmatica*, — a particular dwarf-species, which is only found with us. I doubted at first, feeling uncertain. I have watched it since spring. But see the stem and the corolla, and this perfume like crushed almonds !"

And, unfolding his handkerchief with endless precautions, he released a frail, ungraceful plant, with a milky-white flower, growing paler as it approached the green leaves, and being almost confounded with them. Méraut tried to question him, and get more news from him ; but the monomaniac was absorbed in his mania and discovery. It was indeed a very strange chance that this little plant should have pushed forth, alone of its species, six hundred leagues from his country. Flowers have their history, and they also have their romance ; and it was this probable romance that the good man repeated to himself, while thinking he was telling Méraut : —

"By what peculiarity of ground, what geological mystery, has this little travelling seed been able to germinate at the foot of an oak at Saint Mandé ? Such instances occur sometimes. A friend of mine — a botanist — found a flower from Laponia among the Pyrenees. It is brought in currents of air, and particles of earth that are carried to certain places. But the miracle here is that this bit of plant has grown up exactly in the neighborhood of its compatriots, exiles also. And see how well it is doing : it is a little pale from exile, but its tendrils are ready to climb."

He stood there in the waning daylight, with his clematis in his hand, motionless in happy contemplation, and said suddenly, —

"The devil ! It is late ! I must go in ! Good-by !"

"I will go with you," said Elysée.

Boscovich was stunned. He was present at the fatal scene, and knew how the tutor left, attributing his being sent off to the accident only. What would they think ? What would the queen say ?

"No one will see me, Councillor. You will let me in through the avenue, and I will steal quietly in as far as the room."

"What ! you mean" —

"To go near his Highness, and to hear him speak a moment, without his suspecting that I am there."

The weak Boscovich exclaimed and protested : but he walked ahead all the same, urged on by the desire of Elysée, who followed him without heeding his objections.

Oh ! what was Méraut's emotion, when the little gate, in the avenue among the ivy, opened, and he found himself in that part of the garden where his life was crushed ?

"Wait for me," said the councillor, trembling : "I will come and let you know when the servants are at table. In that way you will meet no one on the stairs."

No one had been to the spot where the firing took place since that fatal day. Traces of hurried footsteps on the trodden borders and gravelled paths brought the scene vividly before Elysée. The same riddled boards hung on the fence ; the water flowed from the basin like a spring of gushing tears, looking gray in the sad twilight hour ; and it seemed to Elysée as if he heard the queen's voice sobbing, and the "Begone ! begone !" which as he seemed to hear it in memory gave him the sensation of a stab and a caress. When Boscovich returned, they glided past the clusters of trees till they reached the house. In the gallery covered with glass, which opened

on the garden, and served as a study-room, the books were ranged on the table, and the chairs of the teacher and pupil stood near, ready for the next lesson, having the cruel, inert appearance of material things.

It was as painful as the silence in the places where the child, laughing and singing and running about, going through his narrow orbit ten times a day, was now missing.

From the staircase, which was fully lighted, Boscovich, who was walking ahead, led him into the room in front of the king's, which was also dark, and where the faintest ray of light was shut out. A night-lamp was burning in a retired alcove, surrounded by bottles and potions.

The queen and Madame de Silvis are near him.

"Be sure and do not speak, and return quickly."

Elysée heard no more, his foot was already on the threshold, and his heart was beating fast and nerved to the sight. His unpractised eyes could not penetrate the dense darkness. He could distinguish nothing; but in the distance he heard a child's voice repeating and intoning the evening prayers, and it was very difficult to recognize it as that of the little king, it was so weary and dull. When he reached one of the many "Amens," the child paused.

"Mother, must I also say the king's prayer?"

"Why, yes, my darling," said the beautiful, grave voice, whose tone had also changed, and was quivering and thin on the edges, as a metal worn out by the constant dropping of water.

The prince hesitated in his answer:—

"Because I thought— It seemed to me that now it was not worth while."

The queen asked quickly, —

“Why?”

“Oh!” said the child-king precociously and wisely, “I was thinking that I should have many other things to ask God than what are in that prayer.”

But recovering himself, from a sudden impulse of his kindly little nature, he added, —

“I will say it at once, Mamma, — at once, — since you wish it.”

And he began slowly, in a resigned but tremulous voice : —

“O Lord, who art my God ! thou hast placed thy servant on the throne ; but I am a child who does not know how to guide himself, and who has been encharged with the people whom thou hast chosen.”

At the end of the room a stifled sob was heard. The queen started.

“Who is there? Is it you, Christian?” she asked, at the sound of a closing door.

At the end of the week the physician declared that they could no longer condemn the little invalid to the torture of the dark room ; that it was time to admit a little light.

“Already?” said Frédérique. “They assured me that it would last more than a month.”

The physician could not answer, that the eye being dead, wholly dead, without hope of restoration, this seclusion was useless. He got off by one of those vague phrases, of which doctors in their pity have the secret. The queen did not understand, and no one near her had strength enough to tell her the truth. They waited for Father Alphée, religion having the privilege to soothe every wound, even those which it cannot heal. With his roughness and rude accent, the monk, who used the

word of God as a club, directed the terrible blow under which Frédérique's pride must give way. The mother suffered on the day of the accident, thrilled in her most tender fibres by the cries, swoon, and the blood which streamed from the wound of her poor little boy. This second grief fell more directly on the queen. Her son deformed, disfigured ! She wished to have him so handsome in the day of triumph ; and must she take this infirm king to the Illyrians ? She would not pardon the physician for having deceived her. Thus, even in exile, kings are always the victim of their own grandeur and human cowardice.

In order to avoid too abrupt a change from darkness to light, they hung green curtains over the casement ; then the windows were opened freely ; and, when the actors in this sad drama could look at each other in the broad daylight, they became aware of the change that had taken place in them during their seclusion. Frédérique had grown old, and was obliged to change the style of dressing her hair, and wear it smooth near the temples to conceal the white locks. The little prince was very pale, and his right eye was shaded by a bandage ; and his whole face, slightly marked with little puckers and precocious wrinkles, seemed to feel the weight of this bandage. What a new life this invalid existence was for him ! At table he had to learn again how to eat ; and, not being able to guide his spoon and fork, they hit him in the forehead or ear, through the awkwardness which affects all the senses when one is destroyed. At this he gave his little childish laugh, and the queen turned aside to hide her tears. As soon as he could go down into the garden, other trials awaited him. He hesitated and stumbled at every step, went sideways

instead of straight ahead, and even fell, or timidly recoiled at the slightest obstacle; clinging hold of his mother's hands and skirts, and turning the corners of the park as if there were so many ambushes behind them. The queen tried to rouse his spirit at least, but the shock had been too great, no doubt: with the visual ray it seemed to have extinguished a ray of intelligence. He understood perfectly, poor little fellow! the trouble that his condition caused his mother; and, while speaking to her, raised his head with an effort, and gave her a timid, awkward look, as if to ask pardon for his weakness and infirmity. But he could not conquer certain unreasonable physical terrors. The sound of firing at the edge of the wood — the first he had heard since the accident — almost threw him into convulsions; and, the first time they spoke to him about mounting the pony, he began to tremble all over.

"No, no, I beg you!" said he, pressing up against Frédérique. "Take me in the landau with you: I am afraid."

"Afraid of what?"

"I am afraid, — terribly afraid."

Neither reasoning nor entreaties availed.

"Well, then," said the queen, with silent anger, "let the landau be harnessed."

It was a beautiful Sunday at the end of autumn, reminding one of the Sunday in May when they went to Vincennes. But, unlike that day, Frédérique was tired of the common crowd in the paths and on the lawns. This open-air gayety and smell of food made her ill. Now she saw only poverty and sorrow among them, in spite of their laughter and holiday dress. The child, trying to smooth the beautiful face, whose disenchanted



expression he attributed to himself, lavished timid and passionate caresses on his mother.

"Are you angry with me, Mamma, for not having taken the pony?"

No: she was not angry with him. But what would he do on the day of his coronation, when his subjects would recall him? A king ought to know how to ride.

He turned his little old face round to look at the queen with his only eye, and asked, —

"Do you really think they would want me now, as I am?"

He looked very sickly, and very old; but Frédérique was indignant at the doubt, and mentioned the King of Westphalia, who was also blind.

"Oh! a king they made fun of. They sent him away."

She then told the history of Jean of Bohemia, at the battle of Crecy, requesting his knights to lead him far enough in front for him to give a blow with his sword; and they led him so far in front, that the next day they all were found dead, their bodies lying on the ground, and their horses tied together.

"It is terrible! terrible!" said Leopold.

And he shuddered, as he pondered dreamily over this heroic tale, as though it were one of Madame de Silvis' fairy-stories; for he was so small, so weak, and so little of a king. Just then the carriage left the borders of the lake, and entered a narrow path, where there was hardly room enough for the carriage-wheels. Some one stepped quickly into the road whom the child could not see, his bandage obstructing his sight; but the queen recognized him. With a grave, hard look, she made a motion of her head towards the poor infirm boy, who was buried in her

skirts, their *chef-d'œuvre* in ruins, the *débris* and wreck of a great race. It was their last meeting, and Méraut left Saint Mandé forever.

## CHAPTER XVII.

FIDES, SPES.

THE Duke de Rosen entered first.

"It is rather damp," he said gravely. "It has not been opened since my son's death."

Indeed, a chill and dampness like that of a sepulchral cave pervaded this splendid suite of apartments on the first floor, where the guzlas had played so proudly, and where every thing was in the same place as on the night of the ball. The two carved chairs of the king and queen, which stood near the musicians' stand, were still there, but were surpassed by magnificent desks of wrought iron; and near them arm-chairs in a row formed an aristocratic reserved circle. The floors were strewn with ribbons, *débris* of flowers, and light faded gauze, and covered with the dust of dancing. One saw that the decorators had hastily taken down the hangings and the garlands of vines, and had hurriedly closed doors and windows in these *salons*, which spoke of a *fête* in a house of mourning. The same neglect was seen in the garden, which was covered with dead leaves, and over which winter, then spring, had passed, without its having been cultivated; for it was overgrown with weeds. Through one of those odd moods of sorrow, which makes one wish that every thing should suffer and wither near it, the duke would not permit it to be touched, any more than he would consent to live in his magnificent apartments.

Since the affair at Gravosa, and after Colette had gone to Nice with her little W to recover from her illness, he gave up his solitary visits to the Quai d'Anjou, and had a bed placed in the intendant's house. Evidently he was going to sell the hotel some day or other, and do without the elegant curiosities which surrounded him. That is why the Venetian mirrors, no longer reflecting the loving couples in the Hungarian mazurkas, and sparkling eyes and chandeliers, mirrored to-day in the gray, cold light of a Parisian sky, the ludicrous faces, greedy eyes, and feverish lips of father Leemans and the before-mentioned Pichery, his acolyte, who looked very wan, with his curly locks and mustache stiff with cosmetic.

Truly, it required all the habitual self-control of the *bric-à-brac* dealer, and his practice in trading and acting those comedies which bring into play all the grimaces of the human mask, for the good man to restrain a cry of joy and admiration when the general's servant, who was as old and straight as his master, had opened the Persian blinds, which were as high as the room. They noisily rattled against the walls on the northern side; and the light, falling through them softly, brought out the shades and superb tones of the wood, bronze, and ivory of all the precious treasures of a collection which were not labelled and cared for like that of Madame de Spalato, but were newer, more rare and foreign, and more numerous and costly, while not one was imperfect, or an imitation.

The Duke de Rosen had not pillaged at random in the fashion of those generals who pass through a summer palace like a bombshell, which, in its devastating track, carries away bell-towers and wisps of straw alike. There

were nothing but carefully selected wonders ; and it was a curious sight to see the *bric-à-brac* dealer stop with his head thrust forward, holding up his magnifying-glass, lightly scratching the enamels and sounding the bronzes indifferently, even scornfully, while from his feet to his head, and from the end of his nails to the point of his flat beard, his whole body vibrated and twitched as if he had been put in communication with an electric battery. It was no less amusing to observe Pichery, who, having no idea of art or any taste of his own, modelled his ideas on those of his companion, made the same disdainful face, which quickly changed into amazement when Leemans said to him in a low voice, while he leaned over his note-book in which he did not cease to take notes, —

“That is worth a hundred thousand francs, if it’s worth a sou.” Here was their sole chance to make up for the “big scheme” in which they had been so largely involved. But they had to keep watch over themselves ; for the old general of pandours, who was as mistrustful and impenetrable as all the dealers put together, followed them step by step, and planted himself behind them without once being their dupe.

They thus reached the end of the reception-rooms, and came to a small room which was raised the height of two steps, and exquisitely furnished in the Moorish style with low divans, carpets, and genuine cabinets.

“Is this one of them too?” asked Leemans.

The general hesitated imperceptibly before answering. It was Colette’s retreat in the immense hotel, — her chosen boudoir, where she took refuge in her rare leisure, and attended to her correspondence. The thought passed through his mind that he should save this little oriental

piece of furniture, which she was so fond of. But he did not hesitate : he must sell it.

"This is to go too," he said coldly.

Leemans, who was immediately attracted by the rarity of a piece of Arabian furniture, which was carved and gilded, with arcades and galleries in miniature, began to examine the various secret drawers opening one into the other by hidden springs, — fresh and delicate drawers, exhaling a fragrance of orange and sandal wood in their satin linings. But, in plunging his hand into one of them, something rustled.

"There are papers here," he said.

When the inventory was finished, and the duke escorted the two *bric-à-brac* dealers to the door, he thought of the papers that had been left in the little piece of furniture, — a package of letters tied with a crumpled ribbon, and impregnated with the delicate fragrance of the drawer. He glanced at them mechanically, and recognized the handwriting. It was Christian's coarse, peculiar, and uneven hand, which for several months had only spoken to him of money in the way of notes and drafts. No doubt they were letters from the king to Herbert. Why, no ! "*Colette, my dear sweetheart.*" He gave the bell a violent pull, and tossed the pile on a lounge, — about thirty notes, appointments for rendezvous, notes of thanks and rejoicing, and all the guilty correspondence in its sad commonplaceness, ending with excuses for broken appointments, the missives becoming colder and colder, and shorter like the little papers at the end of a kite. In almost all there was some reference to a tiresome, persecuting personage, whom Christian mockingly called "The unfortunate Courtier," or simply "Unfortunate C.," and to whom

the duke tried to give a name ; when, at the end of one of the sneering pages, which were more in the language of a libertine than of one in love, he saw his own caricature, his little pointed face on the long claws of a wading-bird. It was he, his wrinkles and eagle's beak and twinkling eyes ; and underneath, to leave no doubt on the subject, was written, —

*“ Unfortunate Courtier mounting guard at Quai d'Orsay.”*

When he recovered from his first surprise, and understood the outrage in all its baseness, the old man exclaimed, “ Oh ! ” and remained there nonplussed and ashamed.

That his son had been deceived was not what surprised him ; but to be deceived by this Christian for whom they had sacrificed every thing, and for whom Herbert died at twenty-eight, — for whom he himself was about to ruin himself, and sell even the trophies of his victory, that the royal signature might not be protested ! Ah ! if he could avenge himself, — take down from that armor two weapons, no matter what kind of ones ! But it was the king ! One did not expect right conduct of a king. And, the magic of the sacred word suddenly appeasing his anger, he said to himself, that, after all, his Majesty, in trifling with one of his servants, had not been as guilty as he, the Duke de Rosen, in making a *mesalliance* between his son and this Sauvadon. He was suffering the penalty of his cupidity. All these reflections did not last a minute. Locking up the letters, he went out, and returned to Saint Mandé to take his place at the desk in the intendant's house, where a quantity of notes and papers awaited him, among which he recognized more than once the coarse, wavering handwriting

of the love-letters ; and Christian would not have dreamed that he knew any thing about them, when, passing through the court-yard after this, he saw the long outline of the "Unfortunate Courtier" behind the window as erect, devoted, and vigilant as ever.

Only kings, to whose persons national and superstitious traditions are attached, can inspire such devotion, even when they are completely unworthy of it. This one, now that his child was out of danger, enjoyed himself more than ever. He at first tried to return to Sephora. Yes, after having been rudely and cynically driven away, — after having proof, every proof, of her treachery, — he still loved her enough to throw himself at her feet at a sign. The fair one at this moment was full of the joy of a renewed honeymoon. Cured of her ambition, and becoming tranquil again, as it was her nature to be, and from which state she was drawn by her greed for millions, she would have liked to sell her hotel, realize from it, and go and live at Courbevoie with J. Tom, and crush the Sprichts with their wealth. J. Tom Levis, on the contrary, dreamed of trying new schemes ; and the high circles in which his wife now moved gave him gradually the idea of another agency in a more luxurious, more fashionable form, — trade in elegant guise, transacted amid the flowers and music of a festival, around the lake, along the race-course, — and replacing the old cab, now consigned to the company who kept small vehicles, with a solid *calèche* in livery with the countess's crest on it.

He had no trouble in convincing Sephora, with whom he came to live permanently ; and the *salons* in Messina Avenue were lighted for a series of dinners and balls, the invitations for which were given out in the name of the Count and Countess de Spalato. They were rather thinly



attended at first ; then the feminine element, which was at first rebellious, ended by treating J. Tom and his wife as one of those rich foreign families who had come from abroad, and whose wealth excused their foreign ways. All the young swells hovered around Sephora, who became the fashion through her adventures ; and the count had a fine business in the very beginning of winter.

They could not refuse Christian admission to the *salons* which had cost him so much, and then the title of king distinguished and recommended the house. He came there in a cowardly way, in the vain hope of again reaching the countess's heart, — not by the main staircase, but by the small entrances, by the way of the back-stairs. After having played some time this *rôle* of dupe or victim, and having appeared every week with his face as white as his linen in a gilded embrasure of a window to which Tom Levis's watchful, revolving eyes riveted him, he became discouraged, returned no more, and ran after other women to drown his sorrow. Like all men who seek a type they have lost, he wandered everywhere, and descended low, very low, led on by Lebeau, an *habitué* in Parisian vice, who often in the morning carried his master's valise into strange filth.

It was a complete downfall, which every day became easier to this weak, voluptuous soul, and from which his sad, quiet home was not likely to save him, there was so little to amuse one in the Rue Herbillon now that neither Méraut nor the princess was there. Leopold V. was recovering slowly, and was confided to Madame de Silvis's instruction during his convalescence, who could now apply the precepts of the Abbé Diguët about the six ways of knowing men and the seven ways of sending off flatterers. They were sad lessons, made awkward by the

bandage, which obliged the little patient to keep his head on one side. The queen presided over them as formerly, looking sorrowfully at the *Clematis Dalmatica*, the little flower of exile about to bloom against the window-pane. For some time the Franciscans had been searching for a tutor; but they could not easily find an Elysée Méraut among the young men of the day. Father Alphée also had his idea about the matter, which he was careful not to give; for the queen would not allow any one to speak the former governor's name in her presence. Once, however, under grave circumstances, the monk ventured to speak of his friend.

"Madame, Elysée Méraut is dying," said he, as he left the table after saying grace.

During his stay at Saint Mandé, through a kind of superstition, as one keeps in the top of a wardrobe an old-fashioned garment one will never put on again, Méraut had kept his room in the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince. He never went there, and left the dust of time and neglect to settle on papers and books in the mysterious silence of this retreat, which was always kept closed and shut out from the noisy life of the hotel. One day he came there, aged and fatigued, with his hair almost white. The stout hostess, roused from her torpor at hearing him fumbling among the keys hung on their nails, hardly recognized her boarder.

"What kind of life have you led, Monsieur Méraut, to allow yourself to shatter your constitution in this way?"

"It is true I am rather winnowed," said Elysée, smiling; and he mounted his five stories, bent over and dejected. The room was just the same, with its melancholy view through the dim glass of roofs and square

monastic towers, the school of medicine, and the amphitheatre, — cheerless buildings revealing the sadness of their destiny ; and on the right, towards the Rue Racine, the two great sheets of water belonging to the city, shining in their stone reservoirs, mirrored the dull sky and smoky chimneys. All was unchanged ; but he no longer had the ardor of youth, which gives color and warmth to every thing around, and which elevates even troubles and difficulties. He tried to sit down at his table and read, and shook the dust from his unfinished works ; but the queen's reproachful look came between his thoughts and the page, and it seemed to him as if his pupil, seated at the other end of the table, were waiting for his lesson and listening to him. He felt too sad at heart and too solitary, and descended hastily and put his key on its nail ; and henceforth his tall, ungainly figure was seen, as formerly, with his hat on the back of his head and a package of books and reviews under his arm, wandering by the quarter, under the galleries of the Odeon, to the Quai Voltaire ; leaning over, and getting the odor of new prints and the huge cases of castaway literature ; reading in the streets, in the paths at Luxembourg, or gesticulating as he leaned, in terribly cold weather, against a statue in the garden opposite a frozen pond. In this atmosphere of study and intelligent youth, which destroying hands have not been able to reach nor quite drive away, he again found his spirit and ardor. Only he did not have the same audience, for the tide of students ebbs and flows in this changing locality.

The meetings were held in different places also ; and the political *cafés* were deserted for the beer-shops, draped with gaudy banners by some fashionable decorator. Their attendants are Swiss, Italian, and Swedish girls in

costume. Of Elysée's former rivals, of the fine orators of his day, and the Pesquidoux of Voltaire, and the Larminat of the Procope, there remained only a vague memory in the minds of young men, as of actors disappeared from the stage. A few had risen very high in power, in public life; and at times when Elysée, with hair flying, went along the shops reading, some illustrious man from the Chamber or Senate would call out from a carriage, "Méraut, Méraut!" Then they would stop and talk. "What are you doing? what are you writing now?" they asked Méraut, who, with a wrinkled forehead, talked vaguely about a great enterprise "which had not turned out well." Not a word more would he say. They wished to get him away from there, and utilize his wasted powers; but he remained faithful to his monarchical ideas and his hatred against the revolution. He asked for nothing, and had no need of any one. Nearly all the money he earned from teaching having been saved, he did not even seek pupils. He shut himself up in disdainful sorrow, which was too great and too deep to be understood; and had no other diversion than a few visits to the convent of the Franciscans, where he went not only to get news of Saint Mandé, but because he liked that odd chapel, its Jerusalem cellar, and the painted and bleeding Jesus. This *naïve* mythology, and these almost pagan representations, charmed the Christian of the early centuries, who sometimes said, "The philosophers place God too high: one no longer sees him."

But Elysée saw him in the darkness of the crypt; and, among all those images of barbarous torture, by the side of Margaret d'Ossuna flagellating her marble shoulders, he fancied he saw that vision of Christmas Eve, — the Queen of Illyria, with outstretched arms, imploring and

protecting at the same time, and with hands clasped around her son as she knelt before the manger.

One night Elysée awoke with a singular burning sensation, which rose from his chest like a wave, giving him a feeling of final annihilation, and filling his mouth with blood. It was mysterious and horrible ; the attack coming like an assassin in the dark, opening doors without a sound. He was not frightened, and consulted some medical students at his *table d'hôte*. They told him that he was very ill.

"What is the matter with me?" he asked. "Every thing," was the answer. He had reached a critical age, having lived forty years of a Bohemian life, in which infirmity lies in ambush watching for a man, and makes him pay dearly for the excesses or privations of his youth. It is a terrible age, especially when the moral spring is broken, and the desire to live no longer exists.

Elysée still led his usual life, always out in the rain and wind ; passing from overheated halls, where the air was exhausted by gas, to the cold streets in midwinter ; and, when the lights were extinguished there, he continued to talk on the edge of the sidewalks, walking half the night. He spit blood more frequently, and a frightful lassitude followed. That he might not be forced to take to his bed, — for the melancholy of his deserted room weighed on him. — he went to the Rialto, a beer-shop next to the hotel, and read his papers and dreamed. The place was quiet till evening, and bright with its light oak furniture, and walls daubed with frescoes representing Venice, bridges, and cupolas against a very watery rainbow, — a most deceptive painting of still life.

The Venetian girls themselves — who were so lively in the evening when they flew round between the benches

rattling their leather money-plates, while their red necklaces were reflected in the beer-mugs — were sleeping with their heads on the table, crumpling the tower of laces and the *bouffantes* batiste sleeves ; or sat around the stove working on some piece of sewing, which they only left to drink with a student. One of them — a tall, strong girl, with heavy tawny braids wound round her head, and whose gestures were slow and grave — would suspend them a moment over her embroidery to listen.

Mérait looked at her for hours until she spoke, when her coarse, shrill voice woke him from his dream. But soon the strength failed him even to take up his station in a beer-shop behind a curtain, which he slipped along on the rod to screen him. At last he could no longer go downstairs, and was obliged to remain in bed, surrounded with books and papers, leaving his door partly open, that the life and sounds of the hotel might reach him. He was forbidden to talk, and resigned himself to write ; and resumed his book, — his famous book on monarchy, — and continued it in feverish excitement and with a trembling hand, shaken by a cough which scattered the papers over the bed. Now he feared only one thing, — that he might die before the end, and go as he had lived, his powers lying dormant, unknown, and unexpressed.

Sauvadon, the uncle from Bercy, whose coarse, irrepressible vanity suffered from seeing his teacher in this state, came to visit him often. Immediately after the catastrophe, he hastened with open purse to ask him, as formerly, for “ ideas about things.”

“ Uncle, I have none now,” Mérait answered, discouraged. And, to draw him from his apathy, the uncle would talk about sending him south, to Nice, to share the sumptuous home of Colette and her little W.

"It would not cost me any more," he said naively, "and it would cure you."

But Elysée did not expect to be cured, and wished to finish his book in the place where it germinated, — in the noise of Parisian streets, — where every one can listen to the sounds he likes best. While he wrote, Sauvadon, seated at the foot of the bed, was talking incessantly about his pretty niece, feeling irritated against the old crazy-headed general, who was about to sell his hotel in Isle Saint Louis.

"I would like to ask you what he can do with all that money! He must hide it away in holes, in little piles. But, after all, it's his affair. Colette is rich enough to get along without him."

And the wine-merchant tapped himself in the region of the watch-pocket, where his figure resembled a well-filled money-bag.

Another time, while throwing on the bed the papers he brought Elysée, he said, —

"It seems they are bestirring themselves in Illyria. They have just sent a royalist majority to the diet at Laybach. Ah! if there had been a man there. But that little Leopold is still very young, and Christian is becoming more brutalized every day. Now he keeps company with his *valet-de-chambre* in visiting inns and low places."

Elysée shuddered all over as he listened. Poor queen! Sauvadon continued, without perceiving the pain he caused: —

"Our exiles are getting on finely. There is the Prince d'Axel compromised in that affair in the Avenue d'Antin, you know, — the Family Hotel, which, with its patriarchal etiquette, served as a refuge for emancipated

minors. What a scandal for a prince, an heir to the crown ! Yet one thing astonishes me : at the very moment this story about the Family Hotel was going the rounds, Colette wrote me that his Highness was at Nice, and that she was present at the regattas in a yacht which he had hired for her. Certainly there must be some mistake. I should be very glad of it ; for between us, my dear Méraut " —

Here the good man confided to his friend very mysteriously, that the royal prince was very attentive to Colette ; and as she was not a woman to — You can think — There might be before long " —

The *parvenu's* broad, rough face lighted with a smile.

"Do you see it? Colette the Queen of Finland, and Sauvadon de Bercy, 'my uncle,' becoming the uncle of the king. But I weary you."

"Yes : I wish to sleep," said Elysée, who had closed his eyes a moment, — a polite way of getting rid of this vain, talkative old man.

When the uncle had gone, he picked up his papers, but was not able to write a line, overcome by disinclination and extreme lassitude. All these hideous stories sickened him. On looking at the papers scattered over his bed, — the plea for royalty in which he had consumed the little blood that was left him, — and thinking of himself in this wretched room, an old gray-haired student, having wasted so much strength and passion, he wondered for the first time if he had not been a dupe all his life. A defender and apostle of these kings, who, degraded by pleasure, had deserted their own cause ! And, while his eyes wandered sadly over the bare walls on which the sunset fell only from the reflection from windows opposite the hotel, he beheld in its dusty frame the old relic, with



a red seal, "Fides, Spes," which he took from his father's bedside, whose handsome Bourbon face at once rose before him, as when he saw it rigid in death, and even in his last sleep marked by his sublime trust and fidelity; while around him the looms were motionless, and the crumbling windmills on the barren, rocky hill-side were outlined against the deep blue sky of the south. It was a brief hallucination, the Enclos de Rey and all his youth floating before his memory, which was already fading.

The door was partly opened of a sudden, and the rustling of a dress and voices were heard. Méraut thinks it is a neighbor — some good girl from the Rialto — who is bringing a cooling drink to assuage his feverish thirst. He quickly closed his eyes, feigning sleep as usual when he wished to send away importunate visitors; but little steps hesitatingly cross the cold, tiled floor, and a sweet voice murmurs, "How do you do, Monsieur Elysée?" His pupil stands before him. He has grown somewhat, but is timid, and looks with the shy, awkward glance which his infirmity has made habitual, at his teacher, who has so changed, and looks so pale as he lies there in his wretched bed. Yonder a veiled lady stands proud and erect against the door. She has come here, and even mounted these five stories; and her immaculate dress has brushed by the doors on which are the signs "Alice," "Clemence." She did not wish that he should die without seeing his little Zara; and, without entering herself, she sends her pardon by the little hand of the child, and this hand Elysée Méraut takes and presses to his lips. Then, turning to the august figure which he divined was at the threshold, he said for the last time, in a very low voice, with his last breath, struggling for life and speech, "Long live the king!"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE EXTINCTION OF A RACE.

THERE was a rough game this morning at the tennis-club. Around the immense field, on the ground which was trodden smooth like that of an arena, a large netting with close meshes enclosed six players, who in white jackets and shoes, such as are worn in armories, were leaping and shouting, and waving their heavy battledores. The light streaming in through the high windows above, as in a hippodrome, the netting, hoarse shouts, and leaping, the white coats thrown back, and the quiet tones of the boys in the hall who are correcting,—all of whom are English, walking with regular paces around the gallery,—would make one fancy himself in a riding-school during a rehearsal of gymnasts and clowns. Among these clowns his Highness the Prince d'Axel, who had been ordered to take the noble exercise of tennis as a hygienic remedy for his coma, might be considered one of the noisiest. Having arrived the evening before from Nice, where he had passed a month at the feet of Colette, he was celebrating his return to Parisian life by this game, and was tossing his ball with a "*Han !*" like a butcher-boy, and throwing out his arms in a manner that would have excited admiration in an abattoir, when an attendant stepped up to him in the most critical point of the game, and informed him that some one had come to see him.

“*Tut!*” answered the heir-presumptive, without even turning his head.

The servant was urgent, and uttered a name in his Highness’s ear which calmed and astonished him.

“Very well! Pray wait. I will come as soon as the round is finished.”

He entered one of the rooms for cold baths which extend around the gallery, furnished with bamboo, and fancifully hung with Japanese matting, and found his friend Rigolo sitting on a lounge, with his head bowed down on his breast.

“O Prince! such an adventure as I have had!” said the ex-king of Illyria, raising a disturbed face.

He stopped, as a boy appeared with towels, woollen gloves, and crash, to sponge and rub his Highness, who was smoking and steaming like a Mecklenburger who has just ascended a hill. When the operation was over, Christian continued, with pale, trembling lips:—

“This is what happened to me. You have heard about the affair of the Family Hotel?”

His Highness turned his dull eyes towards him.

“Caught?”

The king nodded affirmatively, turning away his pretty, restless eyes. Then, after a short pause, he said,—

“Just imagine the scene! The police coming in the middle of the night; the little girl weeping, rolling about, abusing the police, and clinging to my knees. ‘Your Majesty, your Majesty, save me!’ I try to make her hold her tongue; but it’s too late. When I try to give some name, the *commissaire* begins to laugh. ‘It is useless: my men recognized you,’ he said. ‘You are the Prince d’Axel.’”

“That is very fine!” growled the prince, with his head in the wash-basin. “And then”—

"Upon my faith, my dear fellow, I was very much taken aback ; and there are other reasons, too, that I will mention. In short, I let the man think that I was you, being perfectly convinced that nothing would come of it. But, no : people are now talking of the affair ; and, as you might be summoned to appear before the examining magistrate, I have come to beg you " —

"To go to prison in your place?"

"Oh, matters would not reach that point ! Only the papers will speak of it, and names will be given ; and just now, with what is preparing in Illyria, — the royalist movement and our approaching restoration, — this scandal would have the most disastrous effect."

The unfortunate Rigolo wore a most pitiful look while awaiting the decision of his cousin Axel, who stood silently before the mirror, brushing back his few yellow locks. Finally the royal prince said, —

"Then you think the papers will publish it." And he suddenly added, in his weak, sleepy voice, which had the far-away sound of that of a ventriloquist, "*Chic, très chic*. It will enrage my uncle."

He was dressed, took his cane, and drew his hat down over one ear, saying, "Let us go to breakfast." And arm in arm they went away, by the terrace of the Feuillants, till they reached the Tuileries, where Christian's phaeton was waiting for them. They both got in and drew up their furs, for it was a bright, cold winter day ; and the light vehicle flew like the wind, bearing our inseparables to the Café de Londres. Rigolo was relieved and exuberant, and Queue de Poule was less sleepy than usual, being excited by his game of tennis and the thought of the affair, of which all Paris would believe him the hero. As they were crossing the Place Vendôme, which was

almost deserted at this hour, a young, elegantly dressed woman, holding a child by the hand, stopped on the edge of the sidewalk and looked at the numbers. His Highness, who had been looking down from his seat on all the pretty faces with the eagerness of a boulevard promenadeur who had been fasting for three weeks, perceived her, and started. "Look, Christian! one would say" — But Christian did not hear: he was busy watching his horse, which this morning was excited, like his master; and, when they turned round in the narrow vehicle to look at the beautiful pedestrian, she and her child had just entered under the arch of one of the neighboring houses of the ministry of justice.

She walked quickly, with her veil down, and had a hesitating, embarrassed appearance, as for a first rendez-vous; but, though her dark and very rich dress and mysterious appearance might for a moment make this woman suspected, the name which she asked of the porter, and the tone of deep sadness with which this name, that of the most famous in the profession of medicine, was spoken by her, was a strong refutation of any idea that she might be of questionable position.

"Is Doctor Bouchereau in?"

"On the first floor, — the door opposite you. If you have not a card with a number, it is of no use to go up."

She made no reply, but ran up the stairs, drawing the child after her, as if she were afraid that some one might call her back. On the first floor they told her the same thing: "If Madame had not had her name down the evening before" —

"I will wait," she said.

The servant, saying no more, escorted her through the first anteroom, where people were seated on wooden

benches, and through another that was even more crowded ; then solemnly opened the door of the great *salon*, which, when the mother and child had entered, he immediately closed with an air which seemed to say, "You wished to wait, — wait, then !"

It was a spacious room, and very high studded, like all those in the first story in the Place Vendôme, and sumptuously decorated on the ceiling, wood-work, and panels. The furniture of garnet velvet, with chairs and cushions worked by hand, stood far apart, and was incongruous and provincial in form : the drapery and *portières* were alike. Beneath the chandelier, in the style of Louis XVI., stood a small table in that of the Empire. The simple clock between two candelabra, and the absence of every object of art, revealed the modest physician, a worker, who had unexpectedly become the fashion, without taking pains to obtain it. He was as much the fashion as one can only be when Paris has any thing to do with him. His fame extended throughout the world, from the top to the bottom of society, reaching the provinces and abroad, all over Europe ; and that within ten years, without decreasing, and with the unanimous approbation of the profession, who confessed that this time success had come to a true *savant*, and not to a quack in disguise. What gives Bouchereau his fame and extraordinary popularity is not so much his wonderful manipulation as an operator, his admirable lessons in anatomy, and his knowledge of the human frame, as the intelligence and insight which guide him, and which are clearer and more solid than the steel of his tools ; while he has the genial eye of great thinkers and poets, which acts like magic with science, and sees to its depths and beyond. They con-

sult him as a pythoness with blind, unreasoning faith. When he says, "It is nothing," the lame walk, and those given up to die are cured: hence his popularity, which, creating a tyrannical demand, drives him around in breathless haste; for it leaves the man neither time to live nor to breathe. The medical head of a great hospital, he makes a long and careful round of visits every morning, followed by attentive students, who look up to the teacher as to a god, wait upon him, and hand him his instruments; for Bouchereau has no case, but borrows the instrument he needs from some one near him, and regularly forgets to return it. He makes a few visits when he goes out, then quickly returns to his office, and, often without taking time to eat, begins his consultations, which are prolonged very late into the evening. On this day, though it was hardly later than noon, the *salon* was already full of gloomy, anxious faces of people sitting round in a row, or grouped near the stand, poring over books and illustrated papers, hardly turning round to look at those who entered; each being absorbed in himself and his own malady, and full of anxiety as to what the prophet would say. The atmosphere seemed gloomy through the silence of these invalids, whose features were sunken and seamed with pain, and whose dull eyes sometimes brightened with an unpleasant light. The women still preserved their coquetry, some concealing their suffering with a mask of haughtiness; while the men, being taken from their work and the physical activity of life, seemed more overcome and more forlorn. In the midst of this selfish distress, the mother and her little child formed a touching group. He was very delicate and pale, with expressionless features and dull complexion, and but one living eye; and she

was motionless as if paralyzed by frightful anxiety. Once, when tired of waiting, the child rose to go and look at some images on the stand, moving awkwardly and timidly, like one that is infirm; and as he held out his arm he hit an invalid, and received such a cross, frowning look, that he returned to his place empty-handed, and remained motionless, with his head on one side, in that anxious attitude of a bird perched on a branch which one sees in blind children.

There is a true suspension of life in this waiting at the door of the great physician, — a stupor broken only by some sigh or cough, or the rustle of a skirt drawn aside, a stifled complaint, or the constant ringing of the bell announcing a new patient. Sometimes the latter, opening the door and seeing the room filled, quickly closes it again in horror; then, after a colloquy and short debate, he returns at last, resigned to wait, for at Bouchereau's there are no favors granted. He only makes an exception for those of his profession from Paris or from the provinces who bring him a patient: they alone have a right to pass in their card, and be introduced before their turn. They are distinguished by a familiar, authoritative air, walking nervously about the *salon*, drawing out their watch, astonished to see that it is past noon, and that there is no movement yet in the consulting-office. People of every description still pour in, from the heavy, obese banker, who has had his two chairs kept since morning by his servant, to the little clerk who says, "Cost what it will, let us consult Bouchereau." There is every kind of toilet and style, dress-hats and linen caps, and scant black dresses by the side of brilliant satins; but equality remains in eyes reddened by tears, and anxious brows, and the suspense and sadness which pervade the *salon* of a great consulting-physician at Paris.



Among the last comers is a light-haired, sunburnt peasant, with a broad face and shoulders, accompanied by a little sickly creature, supported by him on one side and by a crutch on the other. The father takes touching precautions, bows, under his new blouse, his round shoulders bent by labor, and separates his big fingers to seat the child.

"Are you comfortable? Sit down now. Wait till I put a cushion under you."

He speaks in a loud voice, without embarrassment, and disturbs every one to get chairs and a cricket. The child, who is made timid and refined by suffering, remains silent, with his body bent over, and holds his crutches between his knees. When they are finally settled, the peasant begins to laugh, with tears in his eyes. "*Hein!* here we are! He is a famous man. Come, he will cure you soon."

Then he casts a smile on those present, — a smile which meets with no response from the cold, hard faces. Only the lady in black, accompanied also by a child, looks at him kindly; and, although she seems a little proud, he speaks to her, and tells her his history. His name is Raizou, a gardener at Valenton; his wife is almost always sick, and unfortunately their children take more after her than himself, who is so brave and strong. The three oldest sons died of an affection of the bones. The last promised to grow up well, but for some months he had had a trouble in the hip like the others. Then they placed a mattress on the seats in the wagon, and came to see Bouchereau.

He said all this in a deliberate manner, in the drawling tone of country-people; and, while his neighbor listens to him sympathizingly, the two little invalids examine each

other curiously, drawn together by the malady which gives both — the little one in the blouse and muffler, and the child covered with furs — a melancholy resemblance.

But there is a brief stir in the room. Pale faces flush ; and all heads turn to a high door, behind which is heard a sound of steps, and seats being moved. He is there ; he has just arrived. The steps come nearer. In the opening of the door, which is suddenly thrown back, appears a man of medium height, thick-set, with square shoulders, bald forehead, and hard features. With one look, which meets the anxious gaze of all, he has made the tour of the room, and examined old or new troubles. Some one passes in, and the folding-door closes behind him.

“It does not look favorable for us,” said Raizou in a low voice ; and, to assure himself, he looks at all the people who will pass in before him for a consultation.

There was a large crowd, and many hours to wait, marked by the slow, loud ticking of the old provincial clock surmounted by a Polymnia, and the occasional appearance of the doctor. Each time a place is gained, there is a movement, a little life in the *salon* ; then all becomes dead and still again.

Since she has entered, the mother has not said a word, — not even raised her veil ; and from her silence, perhaps mental prayer, there is something so imposing about her, that the peasant no longer dares to speak to her, and he also remains silent, uttering deep sighs. At one moment they see him draw from his pocket — from a number of pockets — a little bottle, a goblet, and a biscuit in a paper, which he slowly and carefully unwraps, to dip in water for his boy. The child moistens his lips, then pushes away the glass and biscuit. “No, no !

"I am not hungry." And before this poor, pinched, weary face, Raizou thinks of his three older boys, who also were never hungry. His eyes fill, and his cheeks tremble at the thought ; and suddenly he says, —

"Don't stir, dear : I am going down to see if the wagon is there all safe."

This is one of many times that he has gone down to see if the wagon is standing close to the sidewalk in the place ; and, when he comes up smiling and talkative, he fancies they do not see his red eyes, nor purple cheeks, which are so from having been rubbed and mopped with his big fist to keep back the tears.

The hours pass slowly and sadly. In the *salon*, which is growing dark, faces appear paler and more nervous, and turn supplicatingly to the impassive Bouchereau, who makes his regular appearance. The man from Valenton is troubled to think that they will return after dark, that his wife will be anxious, and the little one be cold. His chagrin is so great, and is expressed aloud with so touching a *naïveté*, that when, after five mortal hours, the mother and child see their turn come, they yield their place to the worthy Raizou.

"Oh, thank you, Madame !"

He has not time to be embarrassing in his demonstrations ; for the door has just opened, and he quickly takes his child, raises him, gives him his crutch, so disturbed and overcome with feeling that he does not see what the lady slips into the poor lame child's hand.

"For yourself, — yourself," she whispers.

Oh, how long the mother and child found this last waiting, increased by the night coming on, and the dread which chills them ! Finally their turn arrives. They enter a very large office, long and narrow, and lighted from

a high, broad window, which opens on the place, and admits a little light in spite of the late hour.

Bouchereau's table stands there before them, and is the very simple desk of a country physician or a recorder. He is seated, his back turned to the light, which falls on the new-comers. The woman, whose veil is raised, shows a young, energetic face, with a brilliant complexion, and eyes weary with sad watching; and the little one holds down his head as if the daylight in his face pained him.

"What is the matter with him?" said Bouchereau kindly, drawing him to himself with a fatherly movement; for under his hard face was concealed an exquisite sensibility, which forty years' practice had not yet dulled. The mother, before answering, motioned to the child to move away. Then in a sweet, grave voice, with a foreign accent, she relates, that last year her son, by accident, lost his right eye. Now there was trouble in the left, — a mist and blur, and evident loss of sight. To avoid complete blindness, they advise having the dead eye extracted. Is it possible? is the child in a condition to endure it?

Bouchereau listens attentively, leans over the arm of his chair, his two lively little Tourangeau eyes fixed on the scornful mouth, and the lips that are red with pure blood, and which *rouge* has never touched. Then, when the mother has done, he says, —

"The operation they advise, Madame, is performed every day, and without danger, unless in exceptional cases. Once — the only time in twenty years — I had a poor fellow at Lariboisière, who could not endure it. He was an old man, it is true, — a poor ragpicker, full of alcohol, and badly fed. Here the case is not the same.

Your son does not seem strong ; but he has a fine, strong mamma. We will see about it, however."

He calls the child, takes him between his knees, and, to divert him during his examination, he asks with a pleasant smile, —

"What is your name?"

"Leopold, sir."

"Leopold what?"

The child looks at his mother without answering.

"Well, Leopold ! you must take off your jacket and waistcoat ; for I must examine and listen everywhere."

The child undresses slowly and awkwardly, aided by his mother, whose hands tremble, and the good Father Bouchereau, who is more skilful than either of them. Oh ! the poor little, thin, sickly body, with shoulders drawn in towards the narrow chest like the wings of a bird folded before flight, and the flesh so pale that the scapulary and medals stand out in the dull light as on the cast of an *ex voto* !

The mother hangs down her head, almost ashamed of her work ; while the physician listens and taps him, interrupting himself to ask a few questions : —

"The father is old : is he not?"

"Why, no, sir ! hardly thirty years."

"Often sick?"

"No : very seldom."

"That is well. Now, dress yourself, my little man."

He sinks back in his large arm-chair, and is lost in thought ; while the child, after having put on his blue velvet garment and his furs, takes his place again at the end of the room without being told to do so. For a year he has been so accustomed to these mysteries and whisperings about his malady, that he no longer feels uneasy, and

does not try to understand, but trusts to others. With what an expression of anguish the mother looks at the physician !

“ Well ? ”

“ Madame,” said Bouchereau in a low voice, weighing each word, “ your child is indeed threatened with loss of sight ; and yet, if he were my son, I would not operate upon him. Without thoroughly understanding this little nature, I find strange disorders. The whole system is shattered ; and, above all, there is the most vicious, most exhausted, and poorest blood.”

“ The blood of kings ! ” mutters Frédérique, suddenly rising from a rebellious impulse ; for before her memory arises the pale face of her first-born in her little coffin covered with roses. Bouchereau, who has also risen, being suddenly enlightened by these few words, recognizes the Queen of Illyria, whom he has never seen, since she goes nowhere, though her portraits are everywhere.

“ O Madame ! if I had known ” —

“ Do not apologize,” said Frédérique, who was already calmer. “ I have come here to learn the truth, that truth which kings and queens, even in exile, never hear. Ah, Monsieur Bouchereau ! how unhappy are queens ! And to think they have all been persecuting me to have this operation performed on my child, and yet they knew that it would cost him his life ! But state reasons ! In a month or fortnight, or perhaps sooner, the Diet of Illyria will send for us. They wish to have a king to show them. Such as he is, he would do ; but blind, — no one would want him. Then, at the risk of killing him, they would perform this operation. Reign or die ! And I was going to make myself an accomplice to this crime ! Poor little

Zara ! What matters it whether he reign, my God ? Let him live, let him live ! ”

It is five o'clock, and nightfall. In the Rue de Rivoli, which is filled by people returning from the *bois* on their way home to dinner, the carriages passing slowly by the Tuileries are striped with long bars from the reflection of the fence on which linger the last rays of the fading sunset. The whole of one side of the Arc de Triomphe is still bathed with reflections of rosy light, streaming athwart the sky like the aurora borealis ; while that opposite is already of sad violet, of sombre hue where the shadows are densest on the edges. The heavy carriage with the Illyrian arms rolls past. At the turn of the Rue de Castiglione, the queen suddenly arrives at the balcony of the Hôtel des Pyramides. There, rising before her, are the illusions of her arrival at Paris, light and joyful as the music from the brass band which echoed through the mass of foliage on that day. How many disappointments and struggles since then ! Now it is over. The race is extinct. A chill like death falls on her shoulders, while the landau advances into the shadow, still farther into the shadow.

And she does not see the tender, timid, imploring look which the child turns towards her.

“Mamma, if I am no longer a king, will you love me just the same ? ”

“Oh, my darling ! ”

She presses the little hand held out to her with passionate warmth. Well, the sacrifice is made ! With a heart warmed and comforted by this clasp, Frédérique is no longer the ambitious queen, only a mother ; and when the Tuileries, whose solid ruins are gilded with a last, fading sunbeam, rise suddenly before her, as she gazes at

them, they awaken neither memory nor emotion. They seem to her like some ancient ruin of Assyria or Egypt, — a witness of an extinct civilization and people, a grand thing of the past — dead.







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